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DINOSAUR DESTROYER

by Arthur Petticolas


THE STORY OF DAARMAJD, THE STRONG—
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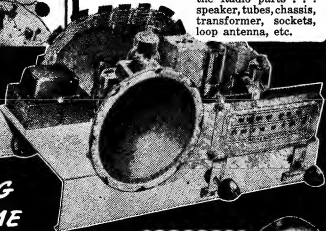
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All Stories Complete

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Illustrated by J. Allen St. John

When he became killer of a dinosaur, Daarmadj's course was destined—he must master the world!

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Legend tells us of these weird monsters, the Bone Men. Will they return to Earth once more?

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It was a delicate problem: how admit a robot to Heaven when it is obvious robots have no soul.

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Illustrated by Bill Terry

Such a little thing: a flea! But atoms are small, too, and they can do strange things to genes . . .

Cover painting by J. Allen St. John, illustrating a scene from "Dinosaur Destroyer"

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The

OBSERVATORY

by the Editor

WAY back in 1947 we bought a story from one of the nicest old men we've ever had the good fortune to have walk into our office. His name was Arthur Petticolos, and he had a manuscript about a prehistoric hero named Daarmadj, The Strong. On a hunch we told him straight off that we'd buy the story, although we didn't need material at that time. The reason we did this was an indefinable conviction that he'd had a lot of experience, and that much of it had been put into his manuscript that would make it vital. We knew, too, from his conversation, that he had read all the stories we had read in our youth and still remembered as classics. We figured he'd put all the enthusiasm of his conversation into his writing also, and how could we miss with a combination like that? Well, now we are publishing "Dinosaur Destroyer," the story of Daarmadj, The Strong, and we think you'll agree that we were perfectly correct in our hunch. You'll find the story on page 8, and we predict you won't lay it down until you've finished it, once you start.

OUR one great regret is a great one—we regret that Arthur Petticolos cannot see his masterpiece in print, that is, in the flesh. For Arthur Petticolos has gone to that land where his hero has gone, the place where heroes never die. Somehow, though, we have another hunch—that Arthur Petticolos *can* see his story in print, in some mysterious way that people call spiritual. It is certain that the magnificent spirit of Arthur Petticolos, and of Daarmadj, The Strong, as well, can never die. Both of them live on in that place the human eye cannot see, but from which they *can* see, or there is no justice. Skoal, Mr. Petticolos!

THE second feature of this issue is the first story of John Stuart Walworth. To Wisconsin readers, the name Walworth will mean something, because Mr. Walworth is one of the Walworth County Walworths, and the family name is a famous one in Wisconsin history. The title of Mr. Walworth's story is "Invasion Of The Bone Men" and we think you'll find that it contains a growing tenseness and suspense that will leave you trembling at its finish. There's not much plot to the story, but it has that something that we call

"true action." It will thrill you and excite you.

THIRD brand new writer this month is Peter Worth. His "The Robot And The Pearly Gates" is one of the most humorous robot stories we've ever read. We know you'll like it.

YES, you guessed it—our *fourth* new writer of the month is Chester Smith, of the *world* Smiths, and an honored name it is. He has given us a short story called "Pattern For Destiny" which is about an invasion from space, yet it isn't. It's more about a herd of deer, and one large buck in particular. But you'll find something brand new in science fiction in this story, and you'll like it. Perhaps we humans aren't as important as we think we are—and perhaps, to the fates, nobility is something we can learn a lot more about, even from a deer!

OKAY, okay, you know the truth now—we've entered a new era! Fifth new writer this month is August Meissner. That means that every story in this issue is by a "first time for our pages" author. Which is a record unequaled since our very first issue twenty-three years ago! How's that for a new deal? And we think you'll agree that this new crop of writers is a bumper crop! Of course this doesn't mean that we won't have your old favorites in *Amazing Stories*, we will. But they will certainly have competition! Let them look to their laurels . . . But to get back to Mr. Meissner, his story is called "The Flea Circus" and it's about fleas—naturally—but fleas that have been exposed to atomic radiation in an atom war. We've had a lot of talk about what will happen to humans in an atom war—but what about other things? Fleas, for instance. What will atomic radiation do to them? And what might it mean to us? Shakespeare once said "there are more things" and he was right. Fleas are things, too, and in this story, a mighty important thing. Read it and see.

WE MIGHT have said we have six stories in this issue, but actually Richard S. Shaver's piece is an article. We illustrated it as we do the stories, and handled it much the same—but it is an article.—*Rsp.*



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DINOSAUR DESTROYER

The Story of Daarmajd, the Strong by Arthur Petticolas

Daarmajd lived and died many thousands
of years ago, but we owe our civilization to him.

FOREWORD

IN PRESENTING to the public the following transcription of my notes in the case of Lewis Varjeon, I have been careful to omit all technical terms and

to refrain from all scientific discussion of the case. This is because I conceive that the generality of the reading public neither understand nor



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no man save one who could conquer her in fight.

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care for such things. It is the human interest of these wonderful race memories (that term I think best fits the narratives) that will, in my opinion, arrest the attention and challenge the interest of the reading public; and their scientific discussion will be best left to scientific audiences.

It only remains for me to assure my readers that I make no claim to author-

ship and that the following narratives are the exact transcriptions of stenographic notes made by me at the times and places in which it was my privilege to listen to them; and that I have avoided, as much as possible, projecting my own personality and opinions into the text.

Septimus Severus Drysdale,
M.D., Ph.D., LL.D.

CHAPTER I

How Daarmajd Slew the Dragon

I VENTURE to call Lewis Varjeon a tawney blond. His hair is nearer to that color than any other I can name, with a glint in it, however, as of gold. Also, his eyes, though gray, are not clear gray; in some lights and in certain moods of the man, there appears in them a hint of yellow—tawney. He is large of feature, square of jaw; tall—well over six feet—a tremendous physique: his great strength is proverbial.

We have always been very good friends, although I am, of course, much the older man. I think in the beginning of our friendship he turned to me to escape the hero-worship to which he was subjected by his fellow students at the University. Being captain of the Varsity eleven, selected by the leading football authorities of the country not merely as the All-American fullback, but as the greatest player of all time; also recognized as the greatest all-around athlete in modern history, hero-worship was, of course, inescapable, though he shunned it, being a modest, quiet sort of fellow. So for relief, I think, he turned to me and to the studies and pursuits—geology, zool-

ogy, anthropology, archaeology and kindred subjects—where we meet on common ground. For Varjeon is a scholar as well as an athlete; and a most likable fellow besides.

We are both rather dry, silent men, chary of speech, more given, if I may say so, to thinking than to talking. There was even a report circulated about the campus last year that gave rise to quite uncalled-for risibility, to wit, that we took long rambles together, daily, for weeks on end without a word being spoken between us beyond infrequent monosyllables. This was, of course, a ridiculous exaggeration and I only repeat it in order that the reader may comprehend my surprise when one day, on one of our frequent excursions into the country in search of geological specimens, Varjeon began speaking most strangely.

We had eaten the luncheon we had brought with us and were reclining, pipes alight, upon the side of a grassy knoll in the shade of a big oak. Suddenly Varjeon made a sweeping gesture toward the north and east.

"All this was a sea then," he said, "a brackish, salt sea, an arm of the

great ocean."

"Doubtless," I replied, supposing that I comprehended his thought, "that would be in pre-glacial times."

But Varjeon spoke on, unheeding.

"It was a shallow sea for the most part, with many shoals and occasional reefs and sedgy, swampy islands. Sometimes, though, the islands were rock masses upthrust from the waters, rugged, forest-covered. But there were deeps in the sea too, vast deeps, where the water gods lived. Where the Great Lakes are now were some of them. The forests that covered the islands were different from anything we know today; they would seem to us weird, bizarre; vast, strange foliated trees, vines and creepers like great twining snakes, tangled undergrowth with thorns like spikes; nightmare forests they would seem to us today. One of those rocky islands was hereabouts. The remnant of it that geologists puzzle over we call Stony Island; which is a misnomer, for it is not an island at all, save in a geological sense; but it was an island then, a vast, rugged forest-covered island extending far to the southward and westward of where its remains are found today. It was there I slew the dragon."

I HAD listened with curiosity and no little amusement to my companion's dissertation. It was so unlike him. But at his last, startling words I sat up and looked at him sharply. Varjeon had spoken as one relating a personal experience. Observing him closely I saw that his eyes, though open, were apparently unseeing; or, rather, introspective, as one who beholds a vision of the mind that has no present reality. His pipe had fallen from his hand. His speech was not that of one who talks in sleep, but clear, quiet, conversational, quite as if relating an episode

of his own life, but—referring apparently to an event of the immemorial past.

I am, I believe, a man of some readiness of mind, and I realized, suddenly, with something like a shudder, that Varjeon, the Varjeon that I knew, was not there present; but that his place had been usurped, or it might be that his personality had, in some inexplicable way, become intermingled with that of another, another Varjeon perhaps, himself yet not himself, a man of an age long buried in the depths of immemorial time. Awe-struck, wondering, I reached in my pocket for notebook and pencil. I realized, intuitively, that due to some inexplicable phenomenon of Varjeon's subconscious mind I might be privileged to listen to and make notes of a narrative ancient beyond the wildest dreams of archaeologist or historian. Another less tactfully keen of mind, though I say it who should not, might have broken the spell; but I—I merely listened and made my stenographic notes, careful not to interrupt the flow of the weird tale that Varjeon unfolded; though it was ghostly, ghastly almost, to hear my friend, whom I had thought I knew so well, this phantom of my friend, speaking to me out of the unknown depths of time.

* * *

WE HAD COME from the northwest (Varjeon continued), the fragment of a broken tribe, of which I was the leader. We had come from another island of the sea. Famine, war, internecine tribal strife, had driven us forth. I and my followers had launched ten great war boats—big they were, hewn from vast trees of the forest—and set forth across the salt sea in search of new homes.

Daarmajd was my name then. Daarmajd meant "The Strong". I was well

named, for in truth I was strongest among the strong, mightiest among the mighty; a great, hairy, tawney giant. I could have given a gorilla, even old Bushman, the fight of his life and, perhaps, have won. Varjeon of today would have been as a babe in the hands of the mighty Daarmajd.

It was a far different world from the world men know today, when we launched our war boats upon the sea. A terrible world. We but rarely saw the sun shining in full splendor because of the canopy of cloud that hid its face; and when, at rare intervals, the canopy opened, the sun's unintercepted rays were deadly. At such times we believed that the sun-god, greatest of all our gods, was angry with men and tempted to destroy them with his burning glance. But generally the sun shone through the pall of cloud, a great, red fiery disc in the heavens—the home, as we believed, of the great All-father god, progenitor of gods and men. The sea was warm and steaming mists arose from it, obscuring all horizons. Storms swept over it compared to which the most terrible storms men know today are but puny atmospheric disturbances. Monsters inhabited both sea and land; frightful creatures, demons of destruction. For the men of that age there was danger everywhere. Nature waged relentless war on man. No respite was there from peril. Men had to be strong in that nightmare world, strong and cunning. We had to develop brawn and brain or else perish.

THREE weeks we had drifted upon the sea and our water skins were empty. We had found no land save swampy islands, the water upon which was as brackish as the sea itself. Our food was gone. We were famished, half dead with thirst, desperate. Off in the

southwest a storm was brewing, coppery thunderheads shading into inky blackness against the gray pall through which the sun shone in sullen splendor. Against the blackness of the storm cloud the lightning flamed and flickered, out of it the thunder rumbled, with now and again crashes as of toppling worlds. We knew that if that tempest found us in its path it would hurl us to destruction, whirl our war boats into the sky, rend them and strew their fragments—and ourselves—upon the sea to be a prey to the monsters of the deep.

From my place at the helm of the leading war boat I saw the eyes of my people upon me—fierce, sullen, reproachful. When I had slain my rival, the mightiest warrior of our tribe, they had hailed me as their leader, followed my leadership and I had led them—to this. There was danger in their fierce, sullen glances, and I knew it; but I recked not their anger. Was not I Daarmajd, "The Strong," the mighty, and was not danger a challenge to daring?

A certain warrior, a mighty man, a would-be leader, sprang up and screamed denunciations at me through parched lips, so cracked and dry that his voice was like the rasping snarl of a tiger. His arm flew up and back and a javelin whistled through the air. Had I not swerved in time it would have found my heart. Upon the instant, even as I swerved to avoid the whistling death, I snatched a javelin from my side and hurled it. It hummed as it flew through the air, like a venomous insect. The warrior caught it upon his shield, but it drove through the shield's covering of the tough hide of the great fish-lizard—*ichthyosaurus* we call it today when from fossil bones we reconstruct its skeleton. Through the shield's wicker frame the spearhead of flaked

flint drove, through muscle and sinew of his arm, on through his body and pinned him to the thwart of the war boat, a corpse. Others behind, who might have followed him in a rush upon me, cowered and shrank back. I was still the leader.

I shouted to them to row for their lives, out of the path of the oncoming storm. The warriors bent to their oars, the war boats shot like arrows through the water; and then—through the curtain of mist to the southeast loomed a rocky headland. It was land. High land. Dry land. We call that rocky headland Stony Island today; but it was not then as Stony Island is now. No. Little resemblance did that rockbound shore, deeply indented by sedgy inlets and crowned by weird, bizarre, unearthly forest, bear to Stony Island of today.

Into one of those inlets—narrow, rockbound, running deep into the land—we drove our war boats. At the head of the inlet there was a ravine down which a stream came tumbling in a succession of cascades. At the sight of water—fresh, sparkling, clear as crystal—there went up a hoarse shout. We beached our war boats, we scrambled ashore and up the rocks and flung ourselves down prostrate beside the rushing water. Forgotten was our peril, forgotten the thunderheads—the storm-wrack filled with black menace—that loomed above the rocks of the ravine, forgotten the livid murk that enveloped sea and land, as we quenched our thirst of days. Forgotten by all save one. I, Daarmajd, "The Strong," the mighty. I was the leader, I must think for my people lest they perish.

OUR first thirst quenched, I shouted to my followers, drove them from the waterside, bade them seek shelter lest we perish in the storm. With a

half-dozen warriors I led the way up the ravine. Above, on the side where we were, I espied a ledge, a sheltered place overhung by rocks, almost like a cavern. To this place I led them, scrambling up the rocks; and there I herded them and left them, myself climbing to the top of the ravine to view the coming storm.

A score or more of the boldest warriors followed me, though I shouted to them to stay back. When we reached the top of the ravine we saw it coming—Og the storm god's chariot—a vast black cloud, played through by lightnings, split by thunderbolts, now incandescent from the vivid flashes, and an instant later blacker than blackest midnight. At the sight my followers fell prostrate, crying out in terror. I alone, Daarmajd, "The Strong," the mighty, dared face the fury of Og, the storm god, standing erect, listening to the roaring of his dreadful voice with head unbowed. A thunderbolt crashed upon a pinnacle of rock that towered almost above the spot where I was standing; and one of the prostrate warriors, crazed with terror, sprang up and dashed into the forest. And then—

From the thicket into which he had disappeared rang out a scream of direst agony, and out from the nightmare forest strode forth the dragon.

Imagine a gamecock thrice the size of an elephant; a gamecock covered with iridescent scales instead of feathers; a gamecock with a great lashing tail, one blow of which would have smashed an average modern dwelling into kindling wood; with legs like the legs of a gamecock but bigger than an elephant's and covered with scales; and three-toed feet big enough to have broken every bone in the body of a horse they stepped upon. At the point where a gamecock's wings join his body was a pair of arms, ridiculously small

in seeming, but only by comparison with the vast body and mighty legs; and above them rose a scaly, reptilian neck and a head with enormous, green, goggle eyes—a head comparable to nothing save a combination of toad and crocodile. And in the dragon's jaws, pierced through by its long, sharp teeth, was the body of the warrior who had fled into the forest—my warrior, crushed and mangled, his blood dripping in a crimson stream from the creature's slobbering jowls.

As the monster advanced with gigantic strides I shouted to the warriors behind me and hurled a javelin; and as it quivered in the creature's side they rose. They were valiant men, those warriors. Before the power of Og, the storm god, they prostrated themselves; but though they feared the monsters of land and sea, they would fight with them to the death. And reason enough there was for fear. One such monster as the dragon advancing upon us had been known to wipe out a whole village.

In an instant the murky air was filled with whizzing javelins, but the dragon still came on as though they had been but thorns of the forest and the warriors fell back before it to the verge of the ravine. But I, Daarmajd "The Strong," the chieftain, the leader, would not retreat. Springing forward, I evaded the snatching claws and snapping teeth as the dragon, dropping the dead warrior, swooped down to seize me; and with all my force I drove my great war spear, pointed with jagged flint, through his eye into his skull until the point stood out half a foot behind, where skull and neck vertebrae joined. Even as I struck, using the shaft of the spear as a lever, like a vaulting pole, I sprang clear over the monster's back; and as I landed, snatching a great stone from the ground, I hurled it from behind against the hideous,

scaly head. Already tottering from the terrible spear wound, the dragon went down before the impact of the stone, thrashing about fearfully in his death throes.

For many and many a year thereafter young warriors, about to bear shield and spear for the first time in battle, were taken to the spot where I slew the dragon, which was called "Daarmajd's Leap," and told the story of that fight so that they might comprehend the measure of valor that was expected of them.

As the dragon fell I shouted to the warriors to seek shelter, and we scrambled down the rocky side of the ravine just as the storm broke upon us.

* * *

AT THIS POINT Varjeon paused, smiling, as if at the recollection of some ordinary incident of his life.

"We survived the storm," he continued presently, "and the flesh of the dragon kept us in meat for many days. That island was uninhabited, perhaps because of the dragons that infested it; but we decided to make our homes there. We called it Dalrada, 'The Place of the Dragon.' Upon Rada the dragon we waged a war of extermination, digging great pits with sharp, pointed stakes at the bottom, baited with tainted meat which they found irresistible. I made up a song about my great leap and the slaying of Rada and sang it to my people. It was a boastful song and our language was barbarous. It could hardly be called a language at all. You would scarcely appreciate that song—"

"Oh, but I would," said I eagerly.

But the thread of subconscious memory was broken. Varjeon started, picked up his pipe, "Why, by Jove! I must have dozed off," said he.

* * *

IT WAS clear to me that Varjeon did not know he had been speaking and

I did not enlighten him. I was at a loss to know what to think of the astounding phenomenon I had witnessed; but I was quite clear in my mind what to do about it at this time and that was—nothing. I determined to await further opportunities for observation, in case they should arise, and in the meantime do nothing which might in any way disturb Varjeon's ordinary mental processes. It was my opinion at that time, and it has become my conclusion since, that certain associations (perhaps trifling in themselves) in his surroundings of the moment, or in some incident of recent occurrence, had loosened a thread, as it were, in the warp and woof of Varjeon's subconscious mind, and that in its unraveling it had revealed an incident of his forgotten past in a forgotten incarnation.

CHAPTER II

How Daarmajd Won the White Axe

I, SEPTIMUS SEVERUS DRYSDALE, am a bachelor with more talent for housekeeping than is generally found in the species. Hence, although my apartment at the St. George, consisting of a combined living room and study, bedroom, kitchenette and bath, generally presents a scene of "most admired disorder"; yet I can fry an egg and bacon, broil a chop, brew an urn of coffee with any cook in the land, and make a bed at which not the most fastidious chambermaid could take exception. Still, as I have hinted, I can scarcely claim tidiness among my cardinal virtues; and my study in particular would at any time be the despair of a neat housewife.

And there I sat one sultry evening in August, my slippered feet upon my desk, or, rather, upon a pile of miscel-

laneous papers, my chair tilted back at a perilous angle, my hands clasped behind my head and my disreputable black briar between my teeth. I was in town not because I would not have preferred to be elsewhere, the Canadian Rockies for choice, but because I was deeply engaged in the preparation of a monograph upon the Sumerian Origin of the Hebrews which had to be ready for the press before the opening of the university in September.

But my thoughts at the moment were not there present, in my study; they were not even in town. Neither were they in the land of my monograph, upon some of the proofs of which my irreverent feet rested; nor in the Canadian Rockies. As I watched the smoke curling up from my pipe fancy changed it into clouds drifting above Lake Michigan. For my thoughts were with my friend, Varjeon, on a thirty-foot yacht somewhere between Chicago and the Straits of Mackinac. Varjeon had gone on the cruise to Mackinac with Allan Scrymgeour not so much I thought because he cared particularly for Scrymgeour's company as because he liked Scrymgeour's sister, Elaine—and Elaine and her mother were summing at Mackinac.

The thought of Varjeon's interest in Elaine Scrymgeour was not a pleasing one to me. Not that I didn't like Elaine. I did. I do. She is a perfectly splendid girl. But just the same I have noticed that marriage changes most men's habits and sometimes their friends also; and I did not wish to lose Varjeon. Reflecting, perhaps unwarrantably, upon matrimonial possibilities between Elaine and Varjeon, the current of my thoughts turned to that strange narrative which Varjeon, unknown to himself, had related to me a few weeks before. Back, back, through countless eons my thoughts drifted into

the unrecorded and forgotten past and I was again with Daarmajd, "The Strong," watching him slay the dragon.

"Strange," I muttered to myself, "strange, that time for him should thus have returned upon itself, bringing him back to the homeland of his race, so changed from that weird world it once had been. And yet," I thought, "was this age after all so far removed in multi-dimensional space and time from that nightmare world in which Daarmajd and his people had lived? Even as light curves back upon itself, perhaps to the point of its beginning, might not space and time curve back to their beginning and creation eternally reenact itself? And then, suddenly, came to me a silly thought. I wondered if Daarmajd had had a wife and if so how she would have regarded Professor Septimus Severus Drysdale? I laughed to myself.

"Why, of course he had a wife, probably a dozen of them, for fighting men are usually popular with the ladies, and all the more in that age, when fighting men must undoubtedly have been at an enormous premium . . ."

Just then the telephone on my desk rang and to my astonishment it was Varjeon's voice that came over the wire. He was downstairs in the lobby.

"What," I exclaimed, "back so soon? Come on up."

I HAVE already remarked that we are men of few words. When, therefore, a few moments later, Varjeon entered my study, I merely expressed my query with a glance; while he, it seemed, was even more laconic than usual. He seated himself in my big upholstered chair, filled and lighted his pipe, leaned back, placed his feet beside mine on the desk and for a few moments smoked in silence. Not until then did he answer my unspoken query.

"Ran into a squall night before last," he remarked casually. "Blew the stick out of her. Sprung a leak on the port side aft. Went down by the stern. *City of Cleveland* picked us up, landed us at Manistee and—here I am."

"Well," I said, "I'm glad you didn't go to Davy Jones."

No further comment I knew was necessary or expected.

Varjeon did not answer. He seemed altogether preoccupied and I watched him narrowly, though covertly, wondering. Presently he removed the pipe from his lips and leaned back at languid ease, his eyes dreamy. Then he began to speak, as I had half expected and altogether hoped he would.

"It is strange," he said, "how one's thoughts get tangled. As I came here I had the strangest feeling that the city was an unreality, a thing that was not and had no business to be; that the streets through which my taxi was passing were quite as much figments of the imagination as—as four-dimensional space to the average human apprehension. And strangest of all, it seemed as if the unreal—the weirdly unreal—were striving to become reality. It was with the utmost difficulty that I could hold fast in my consciousness to the city, the streets, the houses, the very taxi itself, chimeras as they all seemed, and prevent them from being blotted out, swept under by the waves of a shoreless sea."

For a moment Varjeon paused, leaning back, relaxed, in my big easy chair. His eyes were open, but unseeing; but no, not unseeing. Rather were they looking into the depths of time. I reached quietly for notebook and pencil.

"But no, the sea was not shoreless," Varjeon went on presently, "far to the south rocky headlands loomed. The remains of those headlands we today call Stony Island, though it is no island

at all, and regard them as a geological curiosity. But in that nightmare world those headlands were part of an island, a very great island, stretching far to the southward. It was called Dalrada, 'The Place of the Dragon.' I Daarmajd, so named it because it was near to one of those headlands that I slew the dragon."

* * *

WE SURVIVED the great storm and afterward we made our homes in caverns among the rocks. Later on we built huts of stone, of which there was plenty, with mud for mortar. Some of our war boats had been destroyed in the storm and we set to work to build others with such crude implements as we had. When they were completed we launched them upon the sea and set forth to foray—for women. Women were our greatest present need. Of the six hundred who had followed my leadership when our ancient tribe had split up into warring factions, only one hundred were women. These we had carried off by force, some from husbands whom we slew, others, young girls, had followed us not altogether unwillingly. But there were not enough of them and their being so few would be sure to breed dissension. So we forayed upon the islands of the north where our own kind dwelt—The People of the Tawney Hair, we called ourselves—and captured women to be mothers of warrior sons and comely daughters. We would swoop down upon a village, slay the men and from among the women select the comeliest and the strongest. Already we had some glimmering of esthetic appreciation of feminine beauty and strong women we needed to be the mothers of strong warriors. Those of the women whom we rejected we slew. We were savage, fierce men—pitiless. Sometimes we carried away young children who were

strong and sturdy to adopt them into our tribe. If any young boy showed fight we were careful not to harm him, but carried him away and treated him kindly; for from such thorny shoots valiant warriors grew.

It was after we had captured a present sufficiency of women that we began to build stone huts, a hut for each warrior and his wives and children. If a warrior had many wives and many children he built additions to his hut, so that by the size of his dwelling a warrior's importance was known. The status of a warrior in the tribe was determined by three things: by the number of his wives, by the number of his children and the heap of skulls of slain enemies piled neatly before his door. We were a fierce and a lusty race.

We neither sowed nor reaped, but lived by hunting and fishing, though the women gathered fruits and the nuts of certain trees in the forest. But for us war was both the serious business and the greatest joy of life. We loved to foray across the sea in our long war boats, the sudden onset, the deadly strife, loot, the choosing of the women, the flaming village given to destruction and then away to sea again, back to our stronghold in Dalrada. We had found Dalrada an empty land and had taken it for our own. Other men of the Tawney Hair came there from time to time, war bands bent upon foray, or merely wanderers on the sea; but whether the one or the other they went not away again. We either gave them to slaughter, or struck hands with them and incorporated them in the war bands of the Men of Dalrada, as we called ourselves in distinction from other men of the Tawney Hair.

And well content were they to be numbered among the Men of Dalrada; for I, Daarmajd, "The Strong," the mighty, their chieftain, was a fierce and

a restless spirit, under the All-father god sacrificing only to the war gods and the gods of the great deep. Valiant were the men of Dalrada, for valor was the supreme virtue. Any warrior who flinched in battle we took to the verge of the cliffs overlooking the sea and flung him, a sacrifice, to the gods of the deep.

Far and wide I led my war bands upon the sea, harrying with rapine and slaughter all coasts that we could reach in our long war boats; and the name of Daarmajd became a name of terror; and the war bands of Dalrada were dreaded as no others were dreaded. To the south and east we ranged even as far as to the great land of Atlantis where dwelt men dark of skin, black-eyed, black-haired, who dared not meet us in open fight, but hid behind stone walls and set us at defiance.

They had learned to build cities. They were far superior to us in what is called civilization; but they were our inferiors in valor and the virtues of fighting men. Their land was rich, to our simple souls rich beyond the dreams of avarice; and what they lacked in valor they made up in numbers and in the superiority of their weapons; for they had learned to smelt metals and were skilled workers therein. Sometimes the tribes of the islands of the sea would band together for a great foray upon their coasts. Once upon such a foray they had stormed the walls of a great city and revelled for days in slaughter and rapine.

WESTWARD I led the war bands of Dalrada as far as the Land of Nebu. It was far, far to the westward, a forest-covered land, full of vast swamps with great arms of the sea running far inland. It was inhabited by brown-skinned men whom we scarcely regarded as men at all; beastly of fea-

ture, squat-bodied, hairy, bandy-legged, long-armed. But they were strong; terrible fighters with clubs and stones; therefore we harried their coasts for the mere love of fighting, for they had nothing which we coveted. Where their land was the Rocky Mountains are today. I saw them begin to rise at the time of the great cataclysm.

In the islands of the north were our own kind, tawney-haired, gray-eyed men. Little plunder was to be got from them, but much joy of fighting. Eastward and northward we encountered strangers fierce and terrible. They were white, as were we; but whereas we were gray-eyed and tawney-haired, they were blue-eyed and yellow-haired, tending to flaxen, sometimes almost white. They pressed terribly upon our tribes of the Tawney Hair in the islands of the north and east, driving them ever westward and southward. They had better weapons than our tribes, weapons of bronze that they got in barter and foray from the cities along the northern coast of Atlantis, to which they were adjacent, and thus they had a great advantage over us. Also they had learned from the Atlanteans the use of bows and arrows, whereas, until a later day, the only missile weapon of the Tawney Haired was the hurled javelin. But I, Daarmajd, "The Strong," the mighty, and the Men of Dalrada, feared them not. Though to say truth forays upon their coast, north of the great water where are today the Gulf and Valley of the St. Lawrence, brought us more joy of fighting than plunder.

But because of those forays, throughout the islands of the Tawney Haired people the name of Daarmajd became a name of hope as well as a name of terror and was as often spoken with praise as with curses; for I alone with my Men of Dalrada dared insult the

coasts of the Yellow Haired and harry their villages. Young men stole away from their tribes to join my war bands; and old men prophesied around the council fires that Daarmajd, "The Strong," even the pitiless ravager, and his Men of Dalrada, might yet lead the hosts of the Tawney Haired to victory over their most dreaded foes.

I was not unmindful of the rumors that came to me in Dalrada; for it was my ambition to become the supreme chieftain over all the people of the Tawney Haired. I had little hope to achieve the supreme chieftainship by conquest. I knew the people of my race; and I knew that they would either die fighting, or else take to their war boats and sail away to some far land out of my reach rather than submit to my rule imposed by conquest. But if of their own free will they chose me as their leader; and if I could lead them to victory over the Yellow Haired men of the north and east; then I might mold them and shape them into such a thunderbolt of war as our nightmare world had hitherto never known.

At that time there had arisen among the Yellow Haired a mighty chieftain of whom it was said that no warrior in the world, no, nor many warriors, might stand against him in battle. He was called Ruom of the White Axe because of the weapon that he bore with which he could cleave his way through the ranks of battle as a war boat cleaves the waves. It was said also that Ruom of the White Axe was invulnerable and that no weapon could prevail against him. For it was told about the fires in the cavern homes and the stone huts that once upon a time Mahar-Laj, goddess of the sea, had loved a mortal man, and that Ruom of the White Axe was the offspring of their loving; and that she had bestowed upon him the white axe, fash-

ioned by demons down under the sea, and the gift of invulnerability.

SO RAN the tales, coupled with songs of the deeds of Ruom; of how he had slain the great chief of the Isles of Clan-An, north and east of Atlantis, and held the people of the Isles in thralldom, levying tribute upon them; of how he had slain the monster, Tod-Kol, half man, half serpent, son of Linith, the serpent goddess of the far lands of the east whose people, out of gratitude for that deliverance, sent at his summons their best and bravest warriors to join his war bands. The cities of the far north of Atlantis he held in terror, harrying their coast and levying tribute.

All the songs and stories (and songs and stories were all the history that we knew) of Ruom of the White Axe were as thorn pricks to my pride and as oil upon the fire of my emulation. And yet, in my fierce, savage mind as my ambition grew there began to dawn some glimmering of true kingship—thought for my people. If I challenged the power of Ruom of the White Axe and failed, what of them? They would perish. And so I brooded in Dalrada, torn between thought of my people and their fate, should I fail them, and yet yearning to measure my strength against Ruom of the White Axe, the goddess-born, the invulnerable. Would he prove invulnerable to me, Daarmajd, "The Strong," the mighty? Would the white axe avail against my might and my daring? I did not know, but I longed to put the issue to the test of combat and either conquer the dread menace of my race, or else die fighting as became the mightiest warrior of the Tawney Haired.

Branda, "The Flame," decided the issue. He came to Dalrada on the Day of the Dragon, when all the people of

Dalrada celebrated with feasting, with dancing and with song; and sacrifice to All-father god, to Goran, "The Bloody One," the war god, and to Og-Mahar, god of the deep, my victory over Rada, "The Dragon." He came with a score of war boats, undermanned, with some women, some children and a handful of fierce, grim-eyed warriors, gashed and scarred with wounds of recent battle, the remnant of a mighty tribe. On the headland looking out over the sea where we had reared the stone altars of our gods, standing before the altar of Goran, "The Bloody One," he told me the story of how Ruom of the White Axe had descended upon their island and left only earth and water behind. His father, Brahan, "The Burner," had fallen, fighting, as became him. All the villages of their tribe had been given to flame, and their people, all save this remnant, to slaughter. Women and children were not spared. This remnant he, Branda "The Flame," had saved—for vengeance.

Standing before the altar of Goran, "The Bloody One," the war god, he told me the story; with unhealed wounds on face and breast, tall and straight as the shaft of my great war spear, with eyes of yellow flame—a beautiful youth—he told me the story; and cast his war spear down at my feet and called on me for vengeance. Told me too, that the day was inevitable when I, Daarmajd, "The Strong," the mighty, and Ruom of the White Axe, the goddess-born, would strive against each other for mastery; and that it was but folly to postpone it. And I felt in my soul that he spoke true. Therefore I struck hands with him before the altar of Goran, "The Bloody One," and swore by All-father god, by Goran, "The Bloody One," and by Og-Mahar, god of the deep, whose mate Mahar-

Laj had stooped to mortal man, that despite of Ruom of the White Axe and all his host, I would harry the coasts of the Yellow Haired as they had never before been harried, leaving only earth and water behind.

I kept that oath.

Waiting only for Branda and his warriors to be healed of their wounds, I, Daarmajd, "The Strong," and the Men of Dalrada, and Branda and his warriors, launched our war boats upon the sea and set their helms for the coasts of the Yellow Hair. And lo! when we reached them we learned that Ruom and a mighty host had gone southward to foray on the northern coast of Atlantis whose cities had refused tribute. Then were we filled with grim joy; and prepared Ruom of the White Axe and his warriors a woeful homecoming.

FOR two moons we harried the coasts of the Yellow Hair, slaying and burning, leaving only earth and water behind. The villages of Ruom's own tribe we harried and left not man, or woman, or child alive.

I kept the oath that I swore before the altar of Goran, "The Bloody One," the war god.

Then our sea scouts brought us word that Ruom of the White Axe and the host of the Yellow Hair were returning, knowing not the havoc we had made in their homeland. Upon that word I sent a hundred boats that we had taken southwestward to Dalrada, lightly manned but heavy laden with spoils—weapons and shields of bronze and some few of a metal unknown to us; many bows and sheafs of arrows; and ornaments of personal adornment of bronze and silver and gold, spoil of many a foray of the Yellow Haired in Atlantis. But I, and Branda and his warriors, and the Men of Dalrada

turned not homeward. Learning from our sea scouts that Ruom of the White Axe had sent the spoils of his foray on before him in boats lightly guarded, we turned southward and on the day of the new moon met the spoil-laden boats of the Yellow Haired and took the greater part of them, slaying their crews, and then set our helms for Dalrada.

When the news of our great foray upon the coasts of the Yellow Haired spread among the tribes of the Tawney Haired throughout the islands of the sea, there was rejoicing upon the part of some, but fear in the hearts of many; for they dreaded, and with good reason, that Ruom of the White Axe, the goddess-born, would take such vengeance upon the Tawney Haired, indiscriminately, as the world had never known.

So when the rumor ran, like a shudder, throughout the islands of the sea, that Ruom of the White Axe was gathering such a host as had never before been known, that he had summoned warriors from the Islands of Clan-An and from the far lands of the east to join with the Yellow Haired in sweeping the Tawney Haired from their islands, leaving not one of their race alive in the world, some few small tribes came to me in Dalrada; and of young warriors who stole away from their tribes a goodly number; but for the most part the tribes held aloof, swearing they would die fighting in their islands rather than strike hands with Daarmajd, the ravager, of Dalrada. I, Daarmajd, "The Strong," the mighty, the pitiless, had earned their hatred by many a ruthless foray; and now, although many old men's voices were raised for me around the council fires and many young men stole away to join my war bands, the most seemed minded to let me bear the brunt of the vengeance of Ruom, the goddess-born,

hoping, mayhap, that he might spare the rest when he had glutted his vengeance upon me and the Men of Dalrada.

Among those who held aloof in the dark hour for the race of the Tawney Haired and for me and the Men of Dalrada, there was one whom I held in memory for future vengeance, if so be I survived to take vengeance upon any one. This one was Khota-Laj, which means "Beautiful Demon," Chieftainess of Alvana, a great island far to the north and west, over against the Land of Nebu of the Brown Men like unto beasts. It was no strange thing that a woman should be a chieftainess among our tribes, for among us women were held in honor as the equals of men, brave in battle, wise in council; and though generally they went not forth to war, remaining at home to guard the villages in the absence of the men; yet it was no unusual thing among the tribes of the Tawney Haired for women to rise to leadership. Valor and leadership in battle, wisdom in council, whether displayed by men or women, were the sole stepping stones to leadership among us. It had even been known that a captive woman had become chieftainess of the tribe that had captured her.

And this Khota-Laj, "Beautiful Demon," Chieftainess of Alvana, was not merely wise and valiant, she was preeminent, ruling her people wisely and well; and in battle none other could cut their way through the ranks of war as could she, saving only I, Daarmajd "The Strong"; and she had dared to make her boast that if ever we met in battle I would go down, and leave her without a peer among the warriors of the Tawney Haired. And now she held aloof with cunning policy, gathering her war bands in Alvana; and she sent messengers among the tribes of the

Tawney Haired, telling them to gather their war bands and be ready to rally to her; and telling them that when Daarmajd, "The Strong," and the Men of Dalrada, who had so long been the scourges of the islands, should be slain, then would she strike on Ruom of the White Axe and the Yellow Haired when they were scattered and disorganized by hard-won victory. For though she doubted not that the Yellow Haired would be victorious with such odds as they would have against the Men of Dalrada, yet she knew that their victory would be dearly bought and hardly won.

HOT burned my anger against Kho-ta-Laj for her cunning policy and what I regarded as her treachery toward the race of the Tawney Haired. If she would but strike as the battle raged, with her Men of Alvana and the rest of the host of the Tawney Haired, then victory would be almost assured; but to wait until I and the Men of Dalrada had been overwhelmed and slain . . . Ah, hot burned my anger for that treachery! And I swore that if I survived that fight I would fill the cup of vengeance full to overflowing.

And I did not despair of victory. No! I was Daarmajd, "The Strong," the mighty, also the wary and war-wise; and brooding upon the headland overlooking the sea whereon we had built the stone altars of our gods, I planned my battle. For unless Ruom of the White Axe divided his host and, in his confidence of victory, sent part of it to ravage the other islands while he settled his score with me, I meant to fight here, at Dalrada, within sight of our homes and our women and children, that the Men of Dalrada should know that they must conquer or die, and with them all that they held dear.

Cunningly I planned my battle, holding in the eye of my mind the host of the Yellow Haired, countless as the leaves of the forest.

The headland whereon I sat, brooding and planning my battle, formed one side of a great bay, curving deep into the land; and upon the bay's other side the curving shore line was broken by a steep, rocky island which curtailed the mouth of the bay, leaving at its eastern end a deep and narrow strait, and at its western end, overlooking the headland whereon I sat, a much wider strait which formed the main entrance to the bay. And thus I planned my battle:

When our sea scouts brought word of the approach of the Yellow Haired, and if they brought word also that the goddess-born had not divided his host, then would I send Branda, "The Flame," out over the sea to meet them with a hundred war boats fully manned; and with him also I would send a multitude of lesser boats to give the appearance of a mighty host. But ere battle joined Branda would turn about and flee, heading for the narrow eastern strait between the rocky island and the mainland. Branda, "The Flame," was young, a stripling, but valiant, and war-wise beyond his years, and his own war band and the Men of Dalrada trusted his leadership. He would keep the rear and allow the lesser boats to pass through the strait ahead of him, then would he turn about in the strait's mouth and fight to the death, there in the narrow passage between the island and the mainland where the Yellow Haired could not bring their overwhelming numbers against him.

Meanwhile I would have divided my main host into two bodies behind the island that curtailed the bay's mouth; and when the Yellow Haired divided

their host, as I believed they would do after the flight of Branda, one part to pursue Branda, the other to make for the land where clustered villages stood in full view upon the rocky shore, then would I lead out the first body of my war boats that I had kept hidden behind the island out of view of our foes, and strike upon the flank that part of the host of the Yellow Haired that was making for the land.

If any reached the land I could trust our valiant women to hold them at bay from behind the ring-walls of the villages; for though most of those women had been brought captives to Dairada yet now, in our day of black peril, they would fight for their homes, their children and their men. And I meant that they should understand that Branda's flight was but a ruse.

Meanwhile, the other body of war boats, commanded by Lian-Rue, "The Red Shield," a warrior valiant and wary, would watch the fight from the entrance to the bay, sending support to me if I seemed likely to be overborne by numbers and sending a body of war boats to strike Branda's assailants in the rear. Thus I planned my battle; and I had good hope that my plan might succeed; for hitherto I had been famed for headlong valor rather than for cunning, so that the Yellow Haired, expecting from me a desperate fight, but little of war-wisdom, might be taken by surprise and beaten ere they knew they had been beguiled. Also, I meant to single out the war boat of Ruom of the White Axe in the battle, for his death, or mine, would decide the victory. And as I had planned it, so befell the issue.

OVER the sea in the Moon of the Dragon came the host of the Yellow Haired; and with them came warriors and war boats from the Islands of

Clan-An, a great number, and many warriors from the far lands of the East. Our sea scouts reported that their war boats covered the sea so that the sea itself was hidden by them; and that the gleaming of their war spears was like a forest aflame advancing. Then went I among our war boats and looked in the faces of my warriors; and many a face was set and grim-eyed, and many a face was alight with emulation, eyes flaming, but of fear there was no sign. I was exultant as I looked into their eyes, for I knew that they would conquer, or else die as became the Men of Dairada.

On the morning of the first day of the Moon of the Dragon the host of the Yellow Haired came in sight of Dairada; and the gleaming of their war spears was indeed like a forest aflame advancing over the sea. Then Branda, "The Flame," and his hundred war boats and the multitude of lesser boats swept out like a mighty host to meet them; but turned ere battle joined, in seeming headlong panic flight, making for the narrow eastern strait, as I had planned. And as I had hoped the host of the Yellow Haired divided, the greater body pursuing Branda, the lesser making for the land to sack the villages.

Then as I had planned, as soon as battle joined in the mouth of the narrow eastern strait, I swept out from the bay with the first body of war boats that had lain concealed behind the island and struck the war boats of the Yellow Haired that were making for the land upon their flank. With wild war shouts, with blowing of conch shells, the only war music that we knew, we swept over the sea and struck. With primeval fury, battle ecstasy, war madness, we struck upon a foe expecting easy victory. We struck their boats athwart and either sunk them, or

boarded them and gave their crews to slaughter. We sheared through their battle line, breaking their ordered array into wild disorder. The fight was fierce, for than the Yellow Haired there were no warriors in the world more valiant; but they were taken by surprise, their array broken, and the Men of Dalrada fought as men fight with their homes and their women and children behind them; and presently the Yellow Haired broke in headlong flight.

But Ruom of the White Axe, the goddess-born, was valiant, in the world there was no warrior more valiant, and war-wise, and wary. And now I saw his great war boat coming over the sea, leading back the great body of his host from the narrow strait where Branda, "The Flame," had shown his teeth and taken bloody toll of the Yellow Haired, back to where the main battle had joined and disaster threatened. Proudly he came, leading on the countless array of his war boats, less contemptuous, perhaps, of Daarmajd, "The Strong," the pitiless ravager of his coasts, but still confident of victory. But Branda, "The Flame," came on behind him, snatching and tearing at his rearmost boats like a pursuing dragon; and out from the bay came Lian-Ru, "The Red Shield," with his war boats; while I, Daarmajd, "The Strong," the mighty, called a score of war boats from the pursuit of that part of the host of the Yellow Haired we had beaten and turned to strike the array of the goddess-born full in front.

Like a spear head I formed my score of war boats, my own in front, and like a spear head we struck. The war boat of Ruom of the White Axe was the greatest I had ever seen; its prow was high and shaped like the neck and head of "Rada" the dragon, with eyes of jewels, spoil of Atlantis, and teeth in its jaws like dragons' teeth; a hundred

men and half a hundred more would not have crowded it. I knew that my own war boat would not stand the shock of a head-on meeting; therefore, I shouted to the helmsmen of my war boats to swerve and avoid the shock; and ranging my own alongside of the war boat of Ruom, I leaped upon the bulwarks, war axe in hand, and hewed my way through the ranks of the Yellow Haired warriors toward Ruom of the White Axe, the goddess-born, the invulnerable.

HE CAME to the combat as to the arms of a woman! A terrible warrior! Gigantic! His blue eyes aflame with battle rage, blood madness! With shield of bronze and scaled bronze armor upon his body, upon his head a helm of bronze from underneath which his yellow hair streamed in the wind, down like a cascade of gold upon his shoulders. In his hand the white axe gleamed, its helve, gold-banded, made of the black horn of the sea monster, "Lokri," the horned, its broad, curved, white blade like a silver crescent moon of death. I was helmless, armorless, my shield a wicker frame covered with the tough hide of a monster of the sea, my battle axe a flaked flint blade, sinew-lashed to a wooden helve. I was over-matched in all save valor and gigantic strength. Yet as we closed amidships of the great war boat I think we both felt that in the other he had met a champion who was his match and might prove his master and his bane.

Amidships of the great war boat we fought like two furious dragons. Blow on blow I pressed the goddess-born, but his armor foiled me, and his shield and helm of bronze as hard as steel. The blows he dealt with the white axe were terrible! Its blade was razor edged! The arm that wielded it the mightiest I had ever encountered. Soon

I was wounded, bleeding from a dozen cuts but partly foiled! My shield was cleft in twain! The white axe was swung high for the death stroke! But though I felt death coming and gloried grimly in the thought that I should take my death stroke from no lesser hand than that of the goddess-born; yet was I resolved to die in manner worthy of the fame that I had won and the valor of my race, as became Daarmajd, "The Strong," the mighty. Tossing away my riven shield and broken axe, I sprang in under the white death as it descended and grasping the helve of the terrible weapon with both my hands, with a mighty heave and wrench I twisted it from the grasp of the goddess-born, and as he staggered from that deadly grapple I swung the white axe high. Through shield and helm, through bone and brain it sheared, as though naught but naked flesh had opposed it, and Ruom of the White Axe, the goddess-born, the invulnerable, fell like a lightning-blasted tree, invulnerable no more.

I turned, swinging the white axe high and shouting "Victory!" to decide the deadly struggle that raged from end to end of the great war boat; then, when we had tossed the bodies of the slain into the sea, we turned it against the foe.

When they saw Ruom's great war boat leading the attack against them, through all the host of the Yellow Haired the rumor ran, like flickering lightning, that the goddess-born was slain, and upon that their array began to break. Not all, for many of the Yellow Haired warriors fought us to the death.

But Branda, "The Flame," pressed hard upon their rear; and Lian-Ru, "The Red Shield," struck like a thunderbolt upon their flank; while I, Daarmajd, "The Strong," the mighty, forget-

ful of my wounds, drove my spearhead of war boats deep into their front; and the lesser body of their host that had first broken, seeing the overthrow from afar, turned tail upon their pursuers and fled away over the ocean. Deep-dyed were axe and spear with blood that day, the Men of Dalrada glutted their lust for slaughter; and Death "The Pale One," shrieked upon the sea. As darkness fell all the great host was scattered and broken that Ruom, the goddess-born, had gathered to sweep the Tawney Haired from sea and land.

Three days we pursued them, reddening the sea with their blood; then we returned to Dalrada chanting songs of victory.

Great was the spoil of that victory in war boats and in weapons and armor, also much gold and silver and bronze, in articles of personal adornment. And the white axe—it was not exactly white! it shone like flame in the sunshine, but red spots appeared on it quickly if it was not kept constantly burnished. It was a truly terrible weapon though—the first piece of steel I had ever seen.

* * *

VARJEON SHUDDERED slightly, started, sat up, yawned. "By Jove! I'm sleepy," he said, "guess it's from being on the water—and in it. Think I'll go over to my diggings and turn in."

"Why not turn in here?" said I. "The studio couch makes an excellent bed."

And that was what he did.

CHAPTER III

How Daarmajd Wooed the Warrior Maid

I HAD pitched my camp in a sheltered spot half way up the side of a hundred-foot dune in a wild section of the Lake Michigan shore; and there I sat in front of my tent, reclined at

ease in a folding camp chair, pipe alight, contemplating a glorious sunset. The spot was picturesque, and as solitary as any lover of the wild could wish. The dune, an old one, was covered to the top with a growth of young trees, none of them bigger than saplings, and a tangle of vines and bushes; and on this side it fell away steeply to a deep and silent creek that wound around it to empty into the lake. Beyond the creek, crowding it, the forest began, dense growth, ten miles of shadowed solitude, stretching away southward to Tishimingo Lake and River. To the westward the creek made an opening, like a sylvan window, between dune and forest through which Lake Michigan could be seen. At the moment the lake was like a sea of molten gold across which a fiery path, red and flaming, led toward the sunset; and as I gazed along it the thought came into my mind that some prehistoric race of sun worshipers might have regarded that fiery path as a highway leading to the mansions of the blest.

The spot where I had pitched my camp was the only break in the acclivity of the dune on its southern side. Varjeon and I had discovered the spot the year before and had chosen the camp site because of its sheltered position and its easy access to the creek below where we moored our motor boat. The motor cruiser, a joint possession of Varejeon's and mine, was moored there now. I had managed to shunt aside the various preoccupations that had kept me in town during the better part of the summer; and packing my camp equipment into the battered old motor cruiser, the Attawan, I had headed for the Michigan shore and the wildest spot I knew that was not too distant for this tag-end of vacation. Varjeon was to join me there, and he was due today. He had been staying at

the Scrymgeour's summer cottage on Mackinac Island, and as the sun's rim began to dip below the western horizon I wondered if the charm of Elaine's fair young face might not have been strong enough to hold him even against the call of the wild rough life he loved. At any rate, I determined to delay the preparation of supper no longer, being sharp set after a long day in the woods.

I had started my fire—it was the last week of August and there was no need of a fire save for cooking—and had begun to slice bacon and make mental calculations as to the number of flapjacks I could dispose of, when from the brush farther up the creek on the near side there came a whistle that to another might have seemed the call of a bird; but I knew that whistle—Varjeon was coming. Presently he appeared in khaki and puttees, tossed his blanket roll into the tent and his knapsack on the ground beside the fire, remarked:

"Came down on the *J. P. Green*, freighter, to Tishimingo and walked across through the woods. Plenty of bacon, please, I'm hungry as a wolf." He began to mix batter for flapjacks on a scale that bore out his last remark.

THAT was our way with each other, chary of words to the point of miserliness, and yet we thoroughly enjoyed each other's company.

Supper over and another folding camp chair brought up from the motor cruiser, we sat with pipes alight watching the moonrise. Presently Varjeon remarked, apropos of nothing in particular:

"Two artists, ultra modern, came last week, a Count on Saturday and that pest, Jevis, Monday morning. The intellectual atmosphere got a bit too thick for me, so I made my excuses and came away. I was coming any-

way, of course."

That pest, Jevis, happened to be the famous Montclair Jevis, the novelist, who seems to think that the world—particularly America—is going to the damnation bow-wows at a rapid rate, and is rather glad of it—to the tune of a large income a year from royalties. He is one of Varjeon's pet abominations—and mine also—hence I was not surprised at Varjeon's desire to escape from the vicinity of his enormously inflated ego.

When Varjeon spoke again it was in the tone of that strange double personality which I had learned to recognize; it was Daarmajd, "The Strong" speaking, though Varjeon spoke as of himself, and strangely enough, in his thought the present seemed bound up by some subconscious thread, with the immemorial past.

"It is strange how like Elaine she was," he said, "how like and yet how different. Khota-Laj, 'Beautiful Demon,' was her name, Chieftainess of Alvana, and yet—and yet, she was Elaine. She was a warrior maid, for she had sworn to mate with no man save one who could conquer her in fight; and such a man, she made her boast, there lived not in the world.

"When Ruom of the White Axe, the goddess-born, had come to wreak vengeance upon the Men of Dalrada for the harrying of his coasts, having sworn that thereafter he would sweep the Tawney Haired people from their islands and the world, leaving only earth and water behind; Khota-Laj had held aloof with cunning policy, counselling all the Tawney Haired to rally to her, telling them that when Daarmajd, 'The Strong,' the pitiless, the scourge of the islands, and his men of Dalrada, had been destroyed, swept from earth and sea; then would she, Khota-Laj, lead them to victory

over their foes of the Yellow Hair, weakened by losses in a desperate and hard won battle and, as she doubtless hoped they would be, scattered and disorganized even by their triumph. I had sworn to keep that treachery, for so in my own mind I regarded it, of Khota-Laj, 'Beautiful Demon,' in memory and take vengeance to the uttermost."

Long ere this I had taken note book and pencil from my pocket, and by the light of the full moon, shining bright almost as day in the clear, still air, I was able to make my notes. Varjeon ceased speaking and I glanced up, looking keenly at his face. I was startled. His eyes were unseeing; his lips slightly parted in a grim smile; and, as it seemed, into the expression of his face had subtly crept, as if out of the immemorial past, the pride, the ruthlessness and dominant will of that being in whose personality he spoke: I was beholding, or so it seemed to me, not Varjeon, my friend, but Daarmajd, "The Strong," Chieftain of Dalrada.

* * *

THERE have been many decisive battles of the world (Varjeon continued) that Creasy never dreamed of. The overthrow of Ruom of the White Axe, the goddess-born, and the host of the Yellow Haired at Dalrada, was one of them. From thence forward the Tawney Haired people of the Islands of the Sea, were supreme in our old, old nightmare world, dreaded even in far Atlantis; so that the priests of their supreme god, Baal-Holuk, chanted litanies before his altars and sacrificed to him holocausts of human victims, for deliverance from the wrath of Daarmajd, "The Strong," and the Wild Men of the North; for so they called us.

One last struggle for supremacy the Yellow Haired people made, with war-

riors of the Tawney Haired fighting beside them, as allies; but it was not so much a struggle for supremacy of either Tawney Haired or Yellow Haired, as of both for deliverance from the menace of Daarmajd "The Strong," the mighty, and the Men of Dalrada.

When the news went forth among the Tawney Haired, throughout the islands of the sea, of the overthrow of Ruom of the White Axe, the goddess-born, by the Men of Dalrada, fear and dread went with it hand in hand; for they had left the Men of Dalrada and I, Daarmajd "The Strong," to fight alone against the alien; and now they dreaded the vengeance I might take for that treachery. And so it might have been had I not taken counsel of ambition and the dream I had dreamed of welding all the tribes of the Tawney Haired into one irresistible, conquering host.

More and more frequently as my power had grown had my thoughts turned toward the land of Atlantis, not merely as an object of sporadic forays, but of conquest. Great was the land and mighty, its warriors numberless; but even with superior numbers and superior weapons never had they been able to stand in open fight against the warriors of the Tawney Haired; and no longer were my war bands of Dalrada armed merely with axe and spear and javelin of flaked flint rudely lashed to shaft and helve, but with shields and weapons of tempered bronze, spoils of Atlantean forays of the Yellow Haired which we in turn had taken from them; and some of my warriors, a chosen band, were armed with weapons of the strange metal of which the white axe was wrought and which it was said were a part of the tribute paid to Ruom of the White Axe, the goddess-born, by the far lands of the East in gratitude for

his deliverance of them from the monster, Tod-Kol, half man, half serpent, the mortal-begotten son of Linith, their serpent goddess.

But the conquest of Atlantis of which I dreamed would require all the might of the Tawney Haired united and a leader such as I, Daarmajd "The Strong," the mighty, the wary and war-wise; therefore I held back my hand from vengeance against any, save Khota-Laj, "Beautiful Demon," and the men of Alvana. But upon her and her people I was determined to wreak vengeance the more that she was the only rival that I feared for leadership over the tribes of Tawney Haired.

AND in truth, Khota-Laj, "Beautiful Demon," was a rival to be feared. Wary she was, and war-wise, terrible in fight. I knew that her proud vaunt that when she and I should meet, I, Daarmajd, "The Strong," the mighty, would go down before her axe and spear, might prove no empty one. Never had she met her match in fight, breast to breast and hand to hand. And more, she ruled her people wisely and well, withheld them from forays upon their own kind, the Tawney Haired, and whetted their valor upon the Brown Men of the Land of Nebu, terrible fighters and of strength unbelievable. I had heard also that she had begun to teach her people to gather the seeds of certain wild grasses and grind them between stones; and with water making a paste out of the ground seeds, to bake the paste into cakes upon hot stones. She taught her people also to store the seeds against time of scarcity, so that the threat of famine was unknown in her Island of Alvana.

Because of all these things, and because of the cunning policy of Khota-Laj, "Beautiful Demon;" after the overthrow of Ruom of the White Axe at

Dalrada had forever removed the menace and the dread of the Yellow Haired throughout the islands of the sea, wise old men of the Tawney Haired began to say at the council fires that it would be a good world if the menace of Daarmajd "The Strong," and the Men of Dalrada, were also removed. I understood clearly what such counsel portended and whence they were inspired. Khota-Laj, "Beautiful Demon," meant to rally all the tribes of the islands of the sea under her leadership to sweep her only rival from her path and leave behind in Dalrada only earth and water; meaning herself thereafter to bear rule alone over all the Tawney Haired.

But the wise old counsellors could not penetrate her design; they were wise enough to guide their tribes in ordinary times, but their thoughts turned ever backward to the world—their world—as it had been before Khota-Laj, "Beautiful Demon," and I, Daarmajd, "The Strong," had arisen among the Tawney Haired; they could not at all comprehend that the day of the tribes was passing and that the problem of the future was not whether the tribes could survive in their independence and semi-isolation, but whether Khota-Laj or I should bear rule alone over all the Tawney Haired.

But Khota-Laj and I clearly foresaw, had long clearly foreseen, the inevitable struggle between us for mastery. And besides, I had sworn to take vengeance to the uttermost for her meditated treachery. I resolved to strike first and strike swiftly.

Leaving Lian-Ru, "The Red Shield," a chieftain wary and war-wise, to hold Dalrada with a strong war band and the help of our valiant women; I launched a mighty fleet of war boats upon the sea and with Branda, "The

Flame," and all the Men of Dalrada, save those left with Lian-Ru, set our helms for Alvana.

Swiftly sped our war boats over the sea; swiftly we struck the coast of Alvana, harrying and burning, leaving only earth and water behind. But Khota-Laj, "Beautiful Demon," was wary and war-wise and valiant—oh, valiant! Messengers she sent over the sea in swift war boats, to rally to her the tribes of the islands near at hand and bidding others, too far away to come in time, to strike on Dalrada and leave only earth and water behind. She called to her all the warriors of Alvana, bidding the women also to join the host; and all the children and old men and women of her people she sent to the island's central fastnesses. Then she marched toward the eastern coast to meet the allies that she expected from over the sea.

But I had guessed that she would send messengers to summon her allies and had sent a number of war boats to intercept them. Some of them they did intercept, and so I learned her plans. Therefore I sailed to the eastern coast of Alvana, landed and made a strong camp upon a plain beside the sea.

On all the landward side that plain was entirely surrounded by rocky hills rising sheer from the lowland; and the only pass by which it was accessible was a narrow defile leading down from a wide plateau to which the hills, cliffs rather, were like a buttress. Then I sent my fleet, lightly manned, to menace the near-by islands with foray and keep their warriors at home; while at the same time I sent bands of scouts up through the defile to burn the deserted villages on the plateau and watch for the coming of Khota-Laj and the host of Alvana.

THEY came, a mighty host, all the warrior men and women of Alvana; and looking down from the rim of the plateau to the plain, Khota-Laj could see that my war bands were outnumbered two to one, for I had sent many warriors with the fleet to menace the near-by islands. Well might Khota-Laj, "Beautiful Demon," believe that her hour of triumph had come. She swept my scout bands from the plateau and drove them down the pass, pressing them furiously, seeking to gain the lowland with her host before I could form my war bands. But I was ready and, as the first of her war bands issued from the defile, struck them and drove them back; so that the battle joined in the narrow pass instead of upon the plain. All day the battle raged with stubborn fury, there below the beetling crags. The Men of Alvana had the advantage of numbers and of higher ground; but mere numbers were of little use in the narrow space, while the bronze shields and weapons of the Men of Dalrada gave them an advantage which numbers could not overcome. Slowly, steadily we pressed them back, losing many warriors, but the Men of Alvana losing many more; until near the top of the pass, where it narrowed to a mere gorge between sheer cliffs. Khota-Laj rallied a chosen band to hold us in check while the main portion of the host of Alvana retreated to the plateau above where their greater numbers could be used to advantage and perhaps turn the tide of battle. I guessed her intention, knew that the crisis of the battle had come and led a headlong onset with axe and spear to bear down the defenders of the gorge.

All day long Khota-Laj, "Beautiful Demon," and I, Daarmajd, "The Strong," had striven to meet, but ever others had come between to taste red

death on blade of axe and point of spear; but now she stood at the head of her chosen band, her father and her brothers beside her. As I led the Men of Dalrada to the shock, we saw each other and yelled recognition, each of the other's direst foe. But even as the combat joined for possession of the gorge, her father came between us. I hewed him down with the white axe and she sprang at me across his body.

Never until then had I dreamed how beautiful she was—beautiful and terrible. Her tawney hair streaming from beneath her scarlet-crested helmet; her flaming eyes, alight with battle fury; her scarlet tunic streaming in the wind; her lithe, straight body where strength and beauty vied to achieve—perfection. And never had I met so terrible an antagonist. Not even Ruom of the White Axe, the goddess-born, would have been her match.

Well was she named "Beautiful Demon," and like demons we fought until the ground beneath our feet ran red and slippery with our blood. And the battle stood still to watch the combat which for many and many a year would be remembered in song and story and upon the issue of which hung victory and defeat.

Fierce was the combat, but brief. I was the stronger and the white axe the most terrible of weapons. It turned the scale for me. Beaten down by blow on blow, Khota-Laj crouched upon one knee as I swung the white blade high for the death stroke; and then she sprang, thrusting her shield beneath my upraised arm and striking at my face with the head of her broken axe. Partly she warded the descending blow, but she could not stay it; I caught her blow upon my shield of bronze as the white axe fell, shearing through shield and helm, and she pitched forward upon her face,

blood streaming.

THERE ensued above her body a brief and bloody struggle. The brothers of Khota-Laj, valiant men, fell above and around her; and Branda "The Flame," the valiant, beautiful youth, took his death wound in that struggle. With the fall of their chieftainness and her brothers the warriors of Alvana broke in headlong flight and the pass and the plateau above ran red with their blood.

Returning in triumph from pursuit after victory we found Khota-Laj, desperately wounded, but still living; and I, Daarmajd, "The Strong," lifted her up in my arms and carried her to our camp, and I myself bound up her wounds, suffering none other to touch her. The wound upon her head was slight, for she had partly warded the blow, but she had lost much blood from a dozen others. I took her upon my great war boat and made for her a bed as soft as might be of skins and grass and rushes; and when the rest of the war boats came back over the sea from foray upon the near-by islands, I carried her with me back to Dalrada.

I loved her—loved her with a love that was new and strange to me, for with bitterness in my heart I realized that unless with returning strength she should love me, give herself to me freely and with joy, nevermore would I look upon any woman with eyes of love.

For long she hovered between life and death, and I was her only nurse. For hours daily I sat beside her rude pallet, twining her hair, like tawney gold, between my fingers and meditating upon what I should say to her when strength should have flowed back again into her veins. But in the end I said nothing; for as her strength returned, with it returned all her fierce pride

and dauntless, unconquerable spirit; she would not speak, but sat silent, brooding, all day long; and in her fierce eyes there was for me only something of wonder, but more of hatred.

Thrice she attempted to escape and I was forced at last to put bonds upon her, grieving at the necessity and with fierce bitterness growing in my heart. Yet for all that, I abated not in gentleness toward her, save in so much as was necessary to prevent her from attempting to escape.

Meanwhile I abated not in watchfulness toward my foes. From over the sea my sea scouts brought me portentous news. Throughout all the islands of the sea the Tawney Haired people were taking counsel together, laying aside all tribal jealousies. War clouds were gathering. The warriors of Alvana had learned that Khota-Laj still lived, a prisoner in Dalrada; and they had struck hands with the Yellow Haired, even with the enemies of our race, in a compact of vengeance. And as they had done, so also had the other tribes of the Tawney Haired. And they had promised Khota-Laj, in case she should be freed alive, to Rohal-Pinda, "Sun-Champion", son of Ruom, the goddess-born, and now chieftain of the Yellow Haired.

Rumor soon became certainty. Rohal-Pindi, with a mighty host of the Yellow Haired with the Men of Alvana and many others of the Tawney Haired for allies, was coming to Dalrada, to redeem Khota-Laj's captivity and wash out in blood the memory of countless wrongs, suffered by both Tawney Haired and Yellow Haired, at the hands of Daarmajd, "The Strong," the pitiless.

I was joyous at the tidings my sea scouts brought, for I longed for battle and blood to assuage the pain and longing of my soul—pain and longing and

tenderness past understanding.

I was not one to keep my enemies long waiting. I gathered the host of Dalrada and went forth to meet them; and our boats covered the sea—a war cloud out of which our spears gleamed and glittered like lightnings from the heart of a tempest.

KHOTA-LAJ went with me, bound to the thwart of my great boat, and I told her against whom we were going. This is where the battle joined, upon the waves that once covered this spot where we are now sitting. The two fleets of war boats advanced against each other like two storm clouds meeting, and the battle of the warriors thundered across the waves mingled with the rolling of war drums and blare of conch shell horns.

When the fleets had drawn near together I drew alongside a skiff that had been towing in the wake of my great war boat. Then I went to Khota-Laj and cut her bonds, threw axe and spear and shield at her feet, pointed to the skiff and then at the fleet of my foes, and bade her go, told her that she was free—free to fight against me.

But she did not go, she made no move, only leaned against the thwart to which she had been bound and looked at me with flashing eyes in which I saw surprise and, I thought, anger—anger that I should hold her so lightly as thus to throw her prowess, and bravery, and leadership into the scale of the foe against me. And yet she knew I loved her though I had spoken no word.

I thrust the painter of the skiff into her hand and shouted to my men not to hinder or harm her. Then I strode to my place at the prow of my war boat, with rage and disdain in my heart and longing for the shock of battle.

It was a terrible fight. We of Dalra-

da were outnumbered; nor had we advantage of weapons, for the Yellow Haired had bronze armor and weapons, and most of the Tawney Haired had shields and helms and axe and spear of bronze. But my Men of Dalrada were staunch, matchless for valor, and I Daarmajd, "The Strong," the mighty, raged like a demon in the thickest of the fight. I was mad with fury, with battle ecstasy. My soul drank deep of destruction and the white axe turned crimson.

And ever I sought Rohal-Pindi, "Sun Champion," to whom Khota-Laj had been promised. At last I found him. Reckless of the blood that streamed from a dozen wounds, I sprang upon the thwart of his war boat and leaped at him. And at that moment our two war boats swerved apart and I was left alone among my enemies, fighting for the life I cared not for if only before I died the white axe might drink the life blood of my foe. And then, as in a dream of blood and battle, I was aware of one fighting beside me, aware of Khota-Laj, "Beautiful Demon," fighting beside me—fighting for me!

I knew not how she came there, knew not, then, that as the war boats had swerved apart leaving me alone among my enemies, she had leaped after me. In after years our warriors sang songs of that leap and the combat that followed, around our camp fires. But at that moment I realized only that she was fighting for me! That she loved me!

I shouted for pure joy! I swung the white axe as it had never been swung before! I hewed my way to Rohal-Pindi's side and cut him down like a lightning blasted tree. Then we stood back to back above his body, Khota-Laj and I, and our axes drank deep of the blood of the foe.

The men of another war boat of the

Yellow Haired came to the aid of their fellows and Khota-Laj and I were like to be overwhelmed by mere weight of numbers. I already had a dozen wounds and Khota-Laj was soon bleeding also; but the battle ecstasy was upon us and we made around us a ring of the dead and dying. Then there was a shout that I recognized as the war cry of the Men of Dalrada; and—from somewhere in the press around us—a javelin whizzed through the air and struck deep into my unprotected side. After that darkness. Darkness and a vast silence.

When I struggled back from darkness, so like, so near to death, I was lying in my cave in Dalrada; and Khota-Laj, forgetful of her own wounds, was ministering to mine. And when she had adjusted my bandages she took my head in her lap and crooned to me a wild, sweet melody until I fell into a natural slumber.

Victory and Khota-Laj were won.

CHAPTER IV

How Daarmajd Forayed in Atlantic and Won the Sword of Astur

IT WAS about one o'clock in the morning early in September when Varjeon came to my apartment at the St. George. He had been at a reception and dinner dance at the home of Mrs. Geoffrey Thornton in Lake Forest and I was surprised to see him so early, or, for that matter, to see him at all that night. He knows, however, that I am a night owl and, having taken the notion to come, there was actually nothing to surprise me in his doing so.

I did express surprise, however, that he should have left Mrs. Thornton's party so early, the more especially as I knew that Elaine Scrymgeour was to have been there; and it was then I

learned that my young friend was considerably disgruntled.

"That fellow Zangarelli gives me a pain," he remarked, "and Dona Inez gives me the fidgets. I simply had to break away."

Now to refer to Count Antonio Zangarelli as "that fellow" and to state that Dona Inez Santa Ana gives you the "fidgets" was nothing less than social treason at that time in Chicago. Dona Inez is the young Spanish beauty, scion of nobility and all, who has kept a considerable portion of the smart set in Chicago most of the summer because she elected to remain in the city, proclaiming it the ideal summer resort; and Count Zangarelli is the handsome Neopolitan who has created quite a furor among Chicago hostesses. He is the count whom Varjeon mentioned arriving at Mackinac before he came away, and his attentions to Elaine Scrymgeour have been quite obvious though he is old enough to be her father. Elaine, by the way, is just eighteen.

"I think," Varjeon continued, "that Dona Inez and Zangarelli are playing a game. I was elected to take Dona Inez in to dinner and Zangarelli was paired off with Elaine. And there were our dance programs beside our places, as favors, hand painted, shepherds and shepherdesses by this chap deLosier they're making such a fuss over; and I'll be damned if Dona Inez didn't mark up for herself every dance on my program, save three. And there was Elaine sitting opposite beside that fellow Zangarelli, smiling away at him as if he were the answer to a maiden's prayer. I simply *had* to get away."

"Well I'll be damned too," I said, and laughed aloud. Here was a young fellow who *simply had* to get away from dancing with Dona Inez Santa Ana! And Varjeon *can* dance, too. Why, most of the men there would have taken

those dances off his hands at five hundred a dance.

"Aw, don't you see," he protested, "it was a put up job to keep me from dancing with Elaine."

Collusion in the matter between Dona Inez and Zangarelli was quite possible and, to my mind, probable, they both belonging to the somewhat numerous class of our foreign visitors with aristocratic connections, short purses and long pedigrees; and both Elaine and Varjeon being exceedingly desirable fish in the matrimonial sea. So I merely remarked, "Well, yes, it might be" and relapsed into silence.

Varjeon lighted one of my cigars and relapsed into my easy chair and silence simultaneously.

Glancing at him a moment later I divined what was coming and reached quickly for notebook and pencil. The circumstances of the evening had, in some mysterious way, brought to the surface of his subconscious mind memories of another life, of which I had already recorded three episodes.

He laid his cigar on the ash tray at his side. His eyes were dreamy. Presently they closed. When he spoke again it was in the personality of Daarmajd "The Strong."

* * *

WHEN Khota-Laj and I had recovered from our wounds we were mated according to the rude rites in which we had begun dimly to recognize the indissoluble union of man and woman. We lived in a great cavern among the rocks. Khota-Laj drove out the other women I had had—captives taken in war—and because I loved her I bestowed them as gifts upon other warriors whose head wives were not so exacting. Other warriors might have as many women as they could court or capture, but I, the chieftain of them

all, was for Khota-Laj alone.

That cavern was a rude place. Any girl of today would think it horrible, but we were very happy there. After the younglings began to come I built a wall around the terrace that was outside so that they should not fall over the cliff.

We were happy and my war bands waxed strong in Dalrada. After a time the best that were left of the warriors of Alvana came to me for Khota-Laj's sake and they were a notable addition to my bands, for they were valiant men. My villages were mostly on the headlands or at the head of the coves and bays that ran far inland. Mostly my people lived in caves like the one in which I lived with Khota-Laj, sometimes a number of families in one cave; but we also built rude huts of stone thatched with leaves gathered in the forest. In the coves and bays beneath the villages our war boats were drawn up upon the beaches or floated at anchor. In rude songs and chants we told of the war boats of Dalrada, as numerous as trees in the forest. And the war fleets of Dalrada were the terror and the scourge of the islands of the sea and the coasts adjacent.

But more and more often I lead them into the south, to the coasts of Atlantis; for there we found our richest plunder and fighting sufficient. For though they could not stand before us in open battle, the Atlanteans defended themselves furiously behind the walls of their cities; and their weapons were better than ours, being wrought of tempered bronze; and their shields were of bronze and they wore bronze armor upon their bodies, whereas we, save for shields of bronze—spoil of Atlantis—bared our naked breasts to the foe.

Also, the Atlanteans had terrible engines of war mounted upon the walls of their cities with which they flung stones

and darts into our assaulting ranks. One weapon they had, the bow and arrow, with which they wrought us more harm than with any other; but with which we, in our pride, had hitherto disdained as unworthy of warriors who dared to meet their enemies breast to breast and hand to hand. But I, Daarmajd, who as I grew older became wiser, changed all that, teaching my warriors not to disdain any advantage they might gain by adopting new weapons, or by the use of guile or stratagem to overcome the foe. But for all my wisdom it was, after all the headlong onset, hand to hand with axe and spear, that decided the fate of battle.

Now there was in Atlantis, near to its western coast, a mighty city, Baal-Hissar, ruled over jointly by Astur and Astura, brother and sister. So mighty were they that from Baal-Hissar they ruled, it was said, over an hundred subject cities. I know not if that were true, but I know that the host they could muster was countless as the sands of the sea shore.

Many a time had we forayed in the dominions of Astur and Astura, swooping down by surprise and sometimes intercepting outside the walls rich convoys bearing tribute; but ever the walls of Baal-Hissar and its subject cities set us at defiance. Only once, when the men of the Tawney Hair had banded together for a great foray, had we taken one of the subject cities by surprise and sacked it, revelling for many days in slaughter and rapine. And despite the host that Astur and Astura gathered to destroy us we fought our way to our war boats and made good our retreat with our plunder.

But ever I, Daarmajd, "The Strong," the mighty, dreamed of storming the walls of Baal-Hissar itself; and ever as I dreamed, I planned and plotted how it might be done. They knew of me,

did Astur and Astura; for of all the foes that ravaged and insulted their coasts, I and the warriors of Dalrada were the greatest pests; and they had even, as I had heard, offered an hundred weighty bars of gold to the warrior or warriors who should take me captive, or bring them my head and the white axe as proof that I was slain.

AND so, as my power waxed greater and the numbers of my war bands increased, I resolved to make the attempt. Little chance was there, I knew, to take the city by surprise; but I had pondered long, as was my way, upon a stratagem, a daring plan that would either win for some warrior of Baal-Hissar an hundred weighty bars of gold or deliver the proud city to rapine and its inhabitants to edge of axe and point of spear.

And I resolved to have no allies in the attempt. To the Men of Dalrada alone should be the glory of victory or the shame of defeat.

When I gathered my warriors together at our mustering place, a great, flat-topped, cliff-defended headland that thrust far out into the sea; and told them what I meant to do, they shouted for pure joy until echoes rang again, for they were valiant men and their faith in me, their leader, had by now come to be absolute and unquestioning. Only Khota-Laj was wroth; for she was near to delivery of her third youngling and so could not go, nor would I wait the length of time that must elapse before she could.

Then I divided my war bands into three bodies; one I left to defend Dalrada; and with the other two boarded the war boats and set forth for Atlantis. And in the van went I, Daarmajd, "The Strong," the mighty, in the great war boat I had captured in battle from Ruom, the goddess-born.

The voyage to Atlantis was a long one, for we had to go far to the southward in order to double the mountains that lay to the eastward—they are the Appalachians today—peopled by men of the Yellow Hair; and some chance there was that we might have to fight the Yellow Haired men upon the way. But we did not; for even those fierce warriors had learned to dread Daarmajd "The Strong," and the Men of Dalrada.

At last we doubled the great headland of the south, Dar-Atlan we called it, "The Gate, or Portal of Atlantis," and swept on across the sea that lay between Atlantis and the mountains of the east.

When we were come to Atlantis we ascended the great river, Hissar, upon the banks of which Baal-Hissar stood. And when we were near to Baal-Hissar we took by storm a walled village and gave its inhabitants to slaughter; but other than that I allowed not my warriors to foray. At which they wondered mightily; for as yet I had not divulged my plan, not even to the chief warriors, leaders of bands.

NOW there were in the dominions of Astur and Astura not a few men of the Tawney Hair and the Yellow Hair, captives taken in war, slaves, compelled to toil in chains at menial tasks; and destined at the last to be sacrificed in fire to Baal-Holuk, the great god of the Atlanteans. And of such I found six of the Tawney Hair in the village I had stormed. And of these I chose one, the boldest, and sent him with a message to Astur and Astura.

And the message I sent to Astur and Astura was that for a mighty bribe I would forbear to harry their land and return with my warriors to Dalrada; and to that end I requested a conference with them in Baal-Hissar, I and

eight of my warriors with the messenger I had sent as interpreter; and on their part I demanded an oath to Baal-Holuk, their great god, that I and my men should go and return unharmed.

Now I had little expectation that they would accede to my demand for a bribe, for by this time the alarm of our coming had spread through the land and the people of the outlying villages had fled for refuge to the cities, so that there was little harm I could do save to burn tenantless villages and destroy the standing crops; but I did believe that they would grant me the conference I desired, for I knew them to be cunning and treacherous, holding in great contempt the simplicity of mind of the Wild Men of the North, as they called us; so that I felt sure they would seize upon this opportunity to destroy their greatest enemy. As to any oaths they might swear, I had faith in them not at all.

And it fell out as I hoped and desired. For they sent back word by my messenger that they would grant me conference, I and eight of my warriors; and that I should come with them at dawn of the second day to the water gate of Baal-Hissar which fronted upon a great quay by the river. And before my messenger they had sworn a great oath to Baal-Holuk that I and my warriors should go and return unharmed.

At all of which I was joyous and held counsel with the chiefs of my war bands.

At dawn of the second day we presented ourselves at the water gate, I and my eight warriors, mighty men, chosen for valor and daring. Upon the quay before the water gate we found drawn up a band of the warriors of Baal-Hissar, their bronze armor glittering in the light of the rising sun, the plumes upon their helmets waving in the morning breeze. They were armed

with sword and spear and carried great bronze shields. Bodyguards they were, their captain told us through our interpreter, of Astur and Astura.

Their captain, a stout warrior, by the look of him, whose armor and weapons glittered with gold and jewels, came to the quay-side to meet us and told us, through our interpreter, that we must leave our shields and spears and axes in the war boat which had brought us. And this we did.

Then the warriors of the bodyguard formed in two ranks extending through the water gate and into an open space beyond. And between the two ranks we were conducted by the captain, I and my eight warriors, and I walked at the captain's side. And my heart swelled high with pride, for there was not one among my eight warriors that stood not head and shoulders above these men of Baal-Hissar, and I saw not any five among them that together would be a match for one of mine. And then—

As we arrived exactly under the arched portal of the water gate I turned with the quickness of lightning and smote the captain with my fist upon his face, which was unprotected by his helmet, and slew him. As he fell I snatched his sword from its sheath and thrust with it right and left, shouting my war cry. And as did I, so did my eight warriors; and in an instant the water gate could not be closed against us for the corpses of the guards of Baal-Hissar lying across its portal. Then I raised to my lips my conch shell horn and blew a mighty blast.

THEY were valiant men, those bodyguards of Astur and Astura, and might have borne us down by sheer weight of numbers as we stood in a ring fighting beneath the portal, had not that blast upon my conch shell horn been a

signal to the chieftains of my war bands for which they were waiting, having come up the river close to the walls of the city under cover of the night; the war boats having been hidden from the watchers on the walls by the mists of the morning and the height of the river bank.

As it was, we but had time to make around us a circle of the dead and dying when the warriors of Dalrada came leaping from their boats, shouting their war cries, and the city of Baal-Hissar was won.

Ah, the storming and sack of Baal-Hissar! The fame of it rang through Atlantis, and throughout the islands of the sea and the mountains of the Yellow Haired! Drunk was I that day with pride, and glory and battle ecstasy! Hard fighting we had, even after the water gate was won, for many of the houses were like fortresses and the narrow streets were barricaded at every vantage point. But the men of Dalrada were maddened by success and the battle rage was upon them. Naught could withstand them.

Back, back we drove the fighting men of Baal-Hissar, from house to house, from street to street, until they made a last desperate rally in a great square near the center of the city where stood the temple of Baal-Holuk, their great god, the great god of Atlantis. I led the onset that broke that rally. We cut our way to the gate of the temple, and when a compact body of warriors at whose head was one whom I divined was Astur himself, succeeded in closing it against us, I picked up a great stone idol, one of two that guarded it, swung it above my head and sent it crashing through the bronze sheathed portal.

Within was a vast court open to the sky, and in the midst of it stood a gigantic bronze image of Baal-Holuk,

their great god. Round the image the warriors formed a ring and fought there till they died. They were valiant men. In the thickest of the fight I singled out Astur, conspicuous in his diamond-jeweled helmet and the scarlet and yellow plumes that surmounted it, more conspicuous for his valor. He sprang at me like a furious dragon and his jewel-hilted sword, white like the white axe, bit deep into my bronze shield, bit deep and held, and as I wrenched it free I drove my blade, the blade of his captain of the guard, deep into his unprotected throat.

As Astur fell, a shriek rang out above the tumult, a woman's shriek, and looking up, upon a balcony above the court I beheld the woman—Astura. Her arms, hands clenched, were outstretched to the sky, her face distorted with passion, her shrieks like curses. Her robe and the plumes that decked her headdress were scarlet and yellow, on her arms were jeweled arm-bands, her girdle was a flame of gold and jewels; but I scarcely noticed them, so intense was the passion of the woman. Her eyes met mine for an instant and I sensed my foe of foes, cruel, vengeful, implacable. For a moment she stood thus, then turned and disappeared through a scarlet and gold curtain behind her.

Nor could she be found though we searched the temple high and low. Not until long years afterward, when she crossed my path again, did I learn that she escaped through a secret passage that led under the foundations of the city to a secret grotto far outside the walls.

But I cared not so much for her escape, for it did not lessen the glory of the conquest of Baal-Hissar. And I had won the sword of Astur which I would not have exchanged for his sister and queen. Beautiful it was, with hilt

and handguard and scabbard encrusted with jewels. More than beautiful it was—its white blade razor edged, tempered to a hardness that would sheer through the stoutest armor, a weapon in such hands as mine fit to hew down warriors as a child with a stick strikes blossoms from flowers.

Three moons we forayed in Atlantis after the storming of Baal-Hissar; and the countryside grew dark beneath an acrid pall, the smoke of burning villages; and Baal-Hissar also we gave to the flames after axe and spear had done their bloody work. Then we launched our spoil-laden war boats—aye, and many war boats also that we brought from Atlantis—upon the sea and returned in triumph to Dalrada. And there before all the warriors, assembled on the cliff-defended headland, I held up the third youngling that Khota-Laj had borne me while Khota-Laj and the other two stood by my side, and chanted a song of triumph.

And Khota-Laj was no longer wroth because she had not been able to accompany me upon the great foray, but gloried in my glory. Besides she was a mother and joyed more and more in her younglings.

CHAPTER V

How the Land Rose at the Time of the Great Catadysm and Daarmaid Led His People Into the West

"I HAVE been aware for some time," said Varjeon "of the condition you have mentioned, although until now I have had no conception of its true nature. To me it has merely manifested itself as a condition of lassitude, of excessive drowsiness, which comes upon me at times in moments of relaxation. I have not even been aware that I slept, or lost consciousness in any degree,

though I suppose, in view of what you have told me, that I do. It has not worried me at all because I have been disgustingly healthy as usual and have attributed it to laziness and excess beef, both of which conditions training and the training table would cure; but now—"

"But now," I hastened to interrupt, "I think it need not worry you at all either. It comes upon you, as you say, at moments of relaxation and those you can guard against at times when they would not be desirable. As for any effect that these subconscious memories—we may call them that I think—might have upon your character and mentality we may, I feel assured, regard that as negligible; and since it is vouchsafed to you to give to the world these marvelous episodes of an age which exists for us, otherwise, merely in the realm of pure conjecture, it would be a pity to interrupt them."

"Well," Varjeon replied, "maybe we couldn't interrupt them if we wanted to; but this thing of being two people, or perhaps, a number of people simultaneously is—well, exceedingly queer, you'll have to admit, even though I myself may not be aware of it except as you tell me. However, as I have said, maybe the recurrence of this condition could not be prevented even if we wanted to do so. What's your idea about it?"

"Why," I replied, "my idea is that the condition is a transient one, due, possibly, to some unknown ferment in your mind which will eventually cease and with it the recurrence of the condition we have been speaking of; and for the very reason that it is probably transient I think that we ought to make the most of it. Think of it! Such a thing has never occurred before and may never occur again; and to me it would seem almost—well, sacrilegious not to take

fullest possible advantage of such a golden opportunity to acquaint ourselves with some portions of the history of the not merely forgotten, but hitherto absolutely unknown past from the lips, as it were, of one who was an actor and a leader therein."

"Well," Varjeon retorted, "I suppose you are right. Anyway, with such an excellent adviser as yourself at hand to watch over me, I shall not let the matter worry me. So let's forget it and talk about the weather. It is certainly a good day to be inside looking out."

It certainly was, for outside rain was falling in torrents, slashing against our windows driven by a heavy gale, with now and again vivid lightning flashes and crashing peals of thunder. These would die away from time to time to distant flickerings and low rumbles of thunder, only to increase again as a new thunder cloud came over. But the rain and the wind kept up steadily. It was the worst storm the city had experienced in years; or the whole country, for that matter. For days afterward the newspapers were filled with accounts of damage by wind and flood and interrupted rail and wire communications.

It was the day after Varjeon had narrated the episode of Daarmajd's storming of Baal-Hissar; or, rather, it was the same day, for we had not turned in until between three and four in the morning. I had put Varjeon up for the rest of the night on the studio couch; and when I had gone out to morning lecture I had left him sleeping, with a note on the table telling him that I would call at his lodgings in 57th Street upon my return and bring him some suitable apparel, for he had been in evening clothes the night before.

I returned at one o'clock and found that Varjeon had luncheon ready. Then,

at about one-thirty, the storm that had been threatening all the morning came down with darkness as of midnight, with roaring wind and torrential rain and lightning and thunder; and so we decided that within doors was the best place to stay. It was then, as we sat before the window in my study watching the storm, that I had spoken to Varjeon, not deeming it right any longer to withhold from him knowledge of the trance-like condition into which he at times fell and his marvelous narrations when therein of events of elder time.

I had not thought of the storm as a thing likely to provoke a recurrence of that condition, when suddenly, after one of those long periods of silence which were common between us, he began to speak:

* * *

THIS (he said, with a wave of his hand toward the window) is like the storm that preceded the great cataclysm; only that storm lasted, with rain and wind and darkness that covered sea and land, with engulfing flood, with flaming lightning and crashing thunder, for weeks on end.

The great storm and the cataclysm that followed it came not upon us without warning. For several years there had been signs and portents in the heavens and upon the sea, with intermittently terrific rumblings beneath the earth in Dalrada and the islands of the sea. Out of the north, where there had even been an opening and falling away of the pall of cloud which hung above the earth, chill winds blew now and again such as we had never known; and the canopy of cloud above us bent low for months on end, seeming to become denser, hiding from us the light of the sun, the mansion of the All-father god, covering with a murky twilight the sea and the islands

thereof and the coasts adjacent; so that men said the All-father god was angry and meant to destroy the earth and all mankind. And from time to time the earth trembled as if in terror, shaking down our rude huts and driving us forth from our caves. And great waves dashed to and fro upon the sea to break, with tumult and destruction, upon the coasts of the islands and the mainland adjacent; as if the waters were trying to escape and lashing the land in a fury of terror. Many islands were engulfed and the remnants of their people, escaping in their boats, came to me in Dalrada and swelled the numbers of my war bands. But during those years I forayed not; neither I nor my people; for the fear of the All-father god was upon us.

From all around us came rumors of destruction and terror. From Atlantis of storms and tempests and bursting forth of fires from the bowels of the earth with vast destruction of cities and villages; of upheavals of the land followed by subsidences in which the sea rushed over the land destroying all things living; and of holocausts of human victims sacrificed in fire to Baal-Holuk, the great god of the Atlanteans. For their priests proclaimed that these disasters were due to the anger of Baal-Holuk because I, Daarmajd, had been permitted to defile his altar in Baal-Hissar with the blood of Astur and his chieftains.

From the east, from the lands of the Yellow Hair, came news of the sinking of the land to the northward and the sea's inrush with terrible destruction of life, leaving only a few islands that had been highest mountain peaks above the waves. Those islands are today the Catskills and Adirondacks, the White and Green Mountains, and the highlands of the lower St. Lawrence. Also it was rumored that

the men of the Yellow Hair, in terror lest all their lands should be engulfed, had taken to their boats and fled eastward in a vast migration, seeking refuge in lands that lay beyond the great ocean that had already engulfed the northern portion of Atlantis. But from the Land of Nebu, to the westward, came rumors that the land was rising instead of sinking, hills and mountains rearing their heads where before had been swamps, and shallow lakes and bays.

PONDERING upon all these things, in the midst of the great fear that was upon us, I, Daarmajd, "The Strong," the mighty, also the wise, took counsel with Khota-Laj and the chiefs of my war bands; and we caused to be hewn from trees of the forest as many great boats as would carry all our people with food and water for many days. Then we waited the will of the All-father god and the gods of the great deep.

In due time their will and their wrath was made known to us. For upon all the earth, and the sea, and the islands of the sea, a great rain fell; and it was as if an ocean from above was pouring down upon earth and sea. The earth became dank and sodden, and poisonous fungus grew upon the trees of the forest, upon the rocks and cliffs and upon the walls of our caves and houses driving us forth to seek refuge in our boats.

For many days the rain fell and the waters rose, while we hovered around Dalrada in our boats, over which we had built thatches of leaves, for we were loth to leave it. So dark and lowering were the heavens that we could scarcely distinguish night from day; and from the land, from Dalrada, came to us the bellowings of the monsters that dwelt in the forest as they retreat-

ed before the waters that were creeping up to engulf the land; until at last there was no land left above the waters, save only the top of one lofty headland upon which we saw and heard the monsters bellowing and fighting for a foothold, destroying each other even in the rage of their great fear, as we turned the prows of our boats sadly into the west.

We had journeyed many days across the sea, and despite our utmost care in using them both food and water were nigh exhausted, when there came upon the sea and upon the earth beneath it a convulsion and a trembling as if the end of the world and men had come. Great waves rushed to and fro upon the sea; and from out of it the land rose, like a drowned Titan coming to life and shouldering aside the waters. As the mud banks rose above the sea thousands upon thousands of the monsters of the deep were left stranded in the slime and ooze, gasping with a great noise, writhing, struggling, fighting, dying.

Well for us was it that we were good seamen, else had we all perished. Even as it was many boats foundered or were stranded in ooze and slime; and their people sank into it and perished trying to escape. But for the most part we were borne along, ever westward, upon the crest of the waters ever diminishing, until at last we were stranded upon the coast of the land of Nebu, not upon ooze and slime, but upon hard rock. Though many, ah, many! had perished and I wept as I ranged my war bands upon the slope of a newly risen mountain, yet was there left a mighty and a valiant host.

With that great cataclysm in which the land rose, the rain ceased, and out of the north blew a chill wind such as we had never known, and the pall of cloud that had covered the earth was

dissipated—rolled up, as it were—by that glorious light of the sun. Then for the first time we beheld the mansion of the All-father god in all its splendor; and the rainbow, like a glorious bridge between earth and heaven, shining against the receding clouds; and for the first time we saw the stars by night, shining in glory, not as hitherto as through a veil dimly.

And because we knew that the wrath of the All-father god had passed away from the earth and men, we prostrated ourselves before Him; and for three days we danced before Him upon the mountain side; and I, Daarmajd, "The Strong," the mighty, the wise, composed a hymn in His praise and we chanted it, I and all my people, dancing there upon the side of the newly risen mountain.

Then we marched into the Land of Nebu to conquer and possess it.

CHAPTER VI

How Daarmajd Annihilated the Brown Men of the Mountains and Marched into the South

THE Chicago-Minnesota game was over and Varjeon was the hero of the hour. Playing against a Varsity Eleven meeting which was always looked forward to by their opponents with either joy or dread, according to the mettle of said opponents, with the score standing seven to three against Chicago in the last quarter of the second half, Varjeon had come from behind in an eighty yard run for a touchdown that had scored the winning tallies for Chicago. His play in earlier games, although great, as always, had not seemed up to the Varjeon standard; but today the vast throng that witnessed the game had gone mad, stamping, screaming his name, cheering him to the echo; for

they recognized that the "Incomparable Varjeon," as the sports writers had hailed him at the end of last year's season, had come fully into his own again.

Yet, after the game, in the locker room to which he had been carried upon the shoulders of his team mates, I recognized that Varjeon was not happy. I thought I knew the cause. Elaine Scrymgeour had been at the game, of course; but she had not—or had I imagined it—seemed to take the same intense interest in the game as usual. Generally her sweet young voice, albeit of remarkable carrying power, could be heard in the cheering above those around her; but today she had seemed remarkably subdued, almost demure. She had been of a party which included Dona Inez Santa Ana and Count Zangarelli, and the Count had not merely monopolized Elaine—I had watched them, having a seat near at hand—but had done so with an air of assurance, as if the welcomeness of his attentions was a matter of course. Varjeon had seen them I knew, for he would be watching for Elaine and is as keen sighted as a hawk. Perhaps that may have accounted for the fire and fury with which he tore through the opposition in that eighty yard run.

Therefore, I was not surprised when, some time after midnight, Varjeon came to my apartment.

He did not refer at all to the events of the day, but followed up his first brief greeting with:

"If you can get away, let's put the camping outfit aboard the old tub in the morning and go down to the Dunes for a couple of days. I'm going anyway. The 'Old Man' says it's all right." By the "Old Man" he meant, of course, Stagg.

The next day being Sunday, and the suggestion of getting away from the

city for awhile, even if only as far as the Dunes, being alluring, I acquiesced immediately. Varjeon had already subsided into my armchair and lighted his pipe. Varjeon's smoking, by the way, was a thing that Stagg, if he did not expressly permit, at least winked at, despite the fact that training rules as a general thing put the laws of the Medes and Persians quite in the background for inextinguishability. But then, Varjeon as a rule was entirely docile under the training grind and he was *the* star fullback of the continent and the century.

That he was not happy I knew, but he said nothing. He is one of those rare spirits who comprehend that there is no balm like silence for the hurts of the soul. I expected that presently he would speak. And he did.

* * *

GENERALLY (he said), we fought for women and plunder and for the sake of fighting, but without too much rancor, even with esteem and admiration for a valiant foe. Though slaughter in victory was a ferocious rule of the game, yet we liked a man to die fighting. But the Atlanteans we had fought because we hated them with a deadly hatred. They were not as we were; and the difference was not merely the difference between civilization and barbarism. They were quicker witted than we, cunning, treacherous. We—I, Daarmajd, was treacherous enough in war; but had I given a man the hand of peace and then betrayed him, or had any man thrown himself upon my protection in extremity and I had made not his quarrel mine, I would have considered myself dishonored. The Atlanteans would offer you peace with one hand and strike you down with the other. It was my knowledge of this that had enabled me to storm and sack Baal-Hissar. They

had thought that I and my eight warriors were helpless in their hands, victims for sacrifice upon the altar of Baal-Holuk. I had taught them their error; taught them that though my mind might not be so nimble as theirs; yet it was as deep.

And their regard for women was not as ours. To them women were mere toys, playthings to minister to their pleasure; but to be despised and put aside when it came to the serious affairs of life. Not even as mothers were women honored among them. We saw nothing in the nature of woman inherently inferior to man. The mother of many children was honored among us. She was called Matarcha, "The Divider of Meat." Women might—they often did—become chieftainesses of tribes, leaders of war bands, wise in council, valiant in battle. It was only necessary that they should demonstrate qualities of valor and leadership, without which neither man nor woman could bear rule among us. Khota-Laj was not a phenomenon among our women; she was merely preeminent. Whereas, I suppose, no woman save Astura ever rose to rulership in Atlantis; and she came to it by inheritance and as the wife and queen of her brother. When we captured women of a valiant tribe we rejoiced exceedingly, for such women would be the mothers of valiant children.

But if we hated the Atlanteans, we both hated and despised the men of the Land of Nebu: the "Brown Men of the Mountains," we called them. They were more like beasts than men; swart, with long hair upon their legs and arms and much of their bodies; long-armed, bandy-legged, squat-bodied, but with tremendous depth of chest and width of shoulder. Fierce they were and ferocious as are wild beasts, eaters of human flesh. When we marched into

their land after our preservation from the great cataclysm, we drove them before us. They fought us fiercely with their war-clubs, and hiding upon the mountain sides rolled stones down upon us. And we, as we advanced, exterminated them. But ever we had to be upon our guard and there was no cessation from peril of them; for they would lie in wait among the crags to cut off isolated parties, steal up even to our camp fires and villages and the caves wherein many of us lived, strike down a victim from behind and be off with speed; for all their bandy legs they were fleet of foot, running at times upon all fours.

Far different from Dalrada was this Land of Nebu to which we had come. It was a land of steep, newly-risen mountains with deep, swampy valleys between. Of streams that ran down the valleys, but few of which would have floated one of our great war boats. And besides, frequently, the valleys ended abruptly upon the brink of deep chasms down which the streams would leap in cascades beautiful to behold, but obstructive to navigation. We were seamen no more. Forests there were, but forests changed and changing from those we had known in Dalrada in the days before the great cataclysm, even as the climate was changing. For at the time of cold a chill wind blew out of the north; snow fell, at which at first we were frightened, and we were forced to huddle, shivering around our fires.

The monsters of the old time had mostly perished in the great cataclysm, or were fast perishing each year in the unwonted cold; and new beasts there were, or, at least, such as we had never before seen. They had fur upon their bodies instead of scales such as most of the monsters had had; but many of them were gigantic in size and many of

them were fierce and terrible; and all of them were far more wary and difficult to hunt down and kill than any of the monsters had been. Now for the first time we encountered enormous bears having their dens in caverns in which we slew them and, often, took the caverns for our homes. Still more terrible were the wolves, far bigger than any wolves or dogs of today. They hunted in packs and when maddened by hunger knew no fear. Also there were the ancestors of the modern hyaena, cowardly as are their descendants today, but of enormous size and terribly ferocious. But most terrible of all were the cats, Char-tuk, "Knife-toothed," we called them. Of them all we feared most the biggest, a great cat like a modern lynx in body, but bigger than any lion or tiger, with fangs nearly a foot long which even their great jaws could not sheathe and with which they could rip through the tough hide of the mastodon. For the mastodon also we encountered in our new home and bison and giant deer.

All of these beasts we hunted and slew, some for their flesh and some for their hides to cover us from the cold.

Take it all in all, the Land of Nebu was a bleak and forbidding land. We suffered much from cold, to which we were not used; and from hunger, for game was not plentiful, so many beasts having perished in the great cataclysm. Now for the first time, regularly, the women gathered the seeds of wild grasses that grew in the valleys, which they ground and made into coarse cakes cooked on flat stones set upon the coals. Later they began to plant the seeds and store the crop for winter use. Also in the Land of Nebu it was that I taught my warriors to make and use the bow and arrow, taking as models weapons captured in forays in At-

lant; for game was wary and hard to kill with only spears and javelins. As we grew accustomed to the new weapon we became marvelously skillful in its use and in our hands it became a terrible weapon of war.

BUT the land was bleak and we loved it not; game was scarce and hard to kill, so that we were forced to spend most of our time in hunting in order to keep from hunger; nor was there much joy of fighting, for there were no lands that we could reach to foray and the Brown Men of the Mountains, while they fought fiercely enough in their own way, were mere vermin.

Yet were Khota-Laj and I happy, even there, in our cavern home; for a new youngling came to us each year until there were eight stocky, sturdy boys and four tawney-haired, blue-eyed girls, images of their mother. But all this was to end—and I was to become Daarmajd-Khota, "Daarmajd the Demon!"

It happened thus wise: Long had we dwelt in the Land of Nebu, and many were the mothers who numbered as many younglings as Khota-Laj, so that I saw growing up around me a host of young warriors and coming warriors, fierce and valiant, but with naught to whet their valor upon save the Brown Men of the Mountains. At this I grieved, for were not we, the Tawney Haired, of all men, lovers of battle and fighting? Skilled hunters we had become, but hunters are not warriors. And the Brown Men, lurking in the forests and among the crags and upland valleys—pah! We loathed them! Fighting them was but little better than hunting.

But there came a day when we did hunt them—to the death—until valley and mountainside ran red with their blood.

It was at the approach of the time of cold that three trackers of game came to the outlying village above which, in a cavern in the cliffside, Khota-Laj and I dwelt with our younglings. The trackers brought word of a herd of mastodons in the adjacent forest, and I straightway gathered the men of the village to hunt them, for here was a chance to get a supply of meat against the time of cold, the women having learned to cure it with smoke. My eldest boy I took with me, for he was strong and sturdy, valiant and fierce as a young cat of the mountains. And so I and the men of the village marched away into the forest, and for three days we hunted the mastodons, killing seven of the great beasts. Then we returned burdened down with meat, with songs and shouting, for we were joyous that we would not have to go hungry in the time of cold, or else live upon cakes. But as we approached the village the women came not forth to meet us; and upon the village and upon all the valley there was a great and dread silence.

We ceased our songs and shoutings and rushed forward to the village gate. And there we saw them—the two watchers at the gate—their bodies lying where they had fallen, struck down from behind, their skulls crushed with clubs. And within the village was a shambles; but only the watchers at the gate had been struck from behind. All the rest of our valiant women—and children—taken by surprise as they had been, roused from slumber as they had been by the inrush of the vermin, had died fighting. And Khota-Laj! We found her where she had fallen in the forefront of the fight, overwhelmed by numbers, with bodies of the brown beasts heaped around her! And my younglings! Oh, my younglings! They had fallen with their mother, fighting

beside her! All save the infants who had been slaughtered in our cave.

The warriors rushed about the village yelling, screaming, seeking their dead. Afterward they would have rushed forth into the forest in pursuit of the vermin who had done this thing. But I checked them; and standing above the bodies of Khota-Laj and my younglings bade them be patient, swore by the All-father God and all the gods of the Tawney Haired that their anguish should be washed away in a sea of blood.

We buried our dead in a great grave we dug for them in the midst of the valley and heaped above them a high mound of stones and earth like a hill. But the bodies of Khota-Laj and my younglings I laid in the cavern that had been our home and heaped before the entrance a great pile of stones, so that it was covered. And there sleeps my mate forever, the loving, the valiant the wise in council the strong arm in battle, the tender heart by the fireside! I did not weep, I made no outcry, my grief was too deep for weeping. But in heart and brain burned a sullen fire that only the blood of the Brown Men of the Mountains could quench. And my first-born who stood beside me as we placed the last stone upon the pile, did not weep either, but clutched hard the axe in the girdle about his body and in his eyes burned the baleful light of vengeance.

Then I sent forth messengers to carry the news to all the villages of the Tawney Haired; and I bade them gather in a certain valley among the mountains bringing with them all the provisions they had stored for the time of cold. And when they had come I mustered my warriors and told them what I meant to do and they beat upon their war shields and shouted for joy when I had made an end.

I CAUSED them to fortify the camp in the valley strongly with stakes and stones and mounds of earth. Then I sent forth strong parties to hunt and gather in more meat against the time of cold, while the rest built the huts in which we were to live and gathered wood for fuel. But I and my first-born built us no hut, but slept beneath the sky for that our hearts burned so with grief and thirst for vengeance.

All this we accomplished before the coming of the time of cold. But its coming stopped not the going forth of our war bands, albeit it was not the cold winter as we know it, but much milder. North and south and east and west went forth the war bands to hunt down the Brown Men of the Mountains and ever I, Daarmajd, well named now "The Demon," and my first-born went with them glutting our souls with vengeance. Through the forests and the mountains we hunted the vermin. When they took refuge in caverns we built fires before the cavern mouths and smoked them out and slew them, or else they died of suffocation within. At times of drouth we fired the forests to drive them out. For forty moons we hunted them harder than ever we had hunted beasts; and forests and mountain and valley ran red with their blood; until in all the Land of Nebu there was left not one Brown Man, or woman, or child.

Then, at last, when vengeance to the uttermost was accomplished, all the war bands returned to the great camp in the valley; and I bade them go forth again to hunt and gather again a great store of food, as much as each one could march under, for that I meant to lead them into the south, seeking a new land. My heart was filled with bitterness and lust of fighting.

When the full moon shone again upon the mountains, we fired our camp

and marched into the south.

CHAPTER VII

How Daarmajd Fought the Refugees from Atlantis and Met Again Astura, His Foe of Foes

THE moon was at full with a fleecy scud driving across its face borne on a chill wind from the north. Upon the beach below our camp in the Dunes the long swells of Lake Michigan, rolling up from the Straits of Mackinac, broke into white-capped surf and came screaming landward, lashing with foamy tongues the foot of the Dunes.

Supper over and the vestiges of it cleared away, we piled high the driftwood upon our fire and sat beside it, pipes alight and sweater collars turned up against the chill, searching wind, remnant of an autumn gale, that whipped the blood into our faces. Outside the circle of our fire was a world of black and silver, black in shadow, silver in moonlight, while here and there amid the scrub timber that surrounded our camp to landward shafts of moonlight fell, touching the ground beneath like the points of silver spears. The air was crystal clear, bracing as wine; while above, in the heavens, the few stars that the moon permitted to shine glistened like diamonds set in ebony.

It was Sunday night. We had arrived that morning in our battered old motor boat—which could, nevertheless, do thirty-five miles an hour in a pinch and hold it—and pitched our camp beneath an overcast, leaden sky, with a northeast gale whipping the waves into white-caps and driving before it a stinging, needle-pointed autumn rain. But about noon the wind shifted into the northwest, clearing the weather, sweeping clean the sky, save for a litter of drifting scud, and drying

out the sand with its frosty breath that had in it more than a hint of winter.

And now, the brief day ended, we sat by our fire, pipes alight, enjoying ourselves as only men can who love the outdoors and the face of nature unadorned.

"I suppose" I remarked with intention, "that Elaine's foreign friends would hardly appreciate such a night as this save as viewed from behind window glass; but Elaine—"

Varjeon interrupted me with a grunt, or, rather, a snort that warned me I had better pursue that line of thought no further. He leaned back and reclined at ease with one elbow in the sand, the bitt of his pipe gripped savagely between his teeth, his eyes upon the heavens. Presently he spoke:

"The moon shines tonight," he said, "as it shone above the peaks of Sparhelan, which means spearhead, so called because its peaks and crags stood out so sharp against the sky."

When he spoke again his pipe lay upon the sand beside him.

* * *

FOR many moons (he went on) we marched southward and came at last into a land of older mountains, mountains of rugged grandeur. Here again we had encountered brown men, but brown men different from the vermin we had exterminated. We called them Red Men, by way of distinction and because their skins were of a coppery red rather than clear brown. They were tall and straight, well-formed, with straight black hair, black eyes and high cheek bones. Valiant they were, but cruel with a cold, calculating cruelty, making of it a fine art, and wary and cunning beyond thinking.

Much joy of fighting we had with them; for we esteemed them for their valor and because they could laugh in the face of death, taunting their slay-

ers with boasts of the number of warriors they themselves had slain. And with some of their tribes we came to peace, joining them in forays and hunting; learning enough of their language and they of our's so that we could communicate with each other. And from them we learned of a land in the south vastly rich, a land of mighty cities inhabited by Red Men like themselves; but whom they, the Red Men of the north, despised because they lived within stone walls and had become effeminate according to the standards of the northern tribes, who lived in tents of skin and bark among the mountains. Besides, their gods were not the gods of the northern tribes, who believed in the All-father God, as did we, calling Him the Great Spirit who ruled over earth and sky, and all lesser gods, and men.

Much they told us of a mighty city called Iztahuacan, in which dwelt the rulers of all the lands and cities of the south, the greatest of them being seven in number. And in Iztahuacan, they said, was the chief temple of the Serpent god the god of gods of the Aztalans as these people of the south were called; and surrounding the chief temple of the Serpent god were many lesser temples—numberless according to the story—of the lesser gods of the Aztalans all fabulously rich; so that the city of Iztahuacan was esteemed holy throughout all the lands of the south and its chieftain, who was also high priest of the Serpent god, sacred.

Pondering upon these stories which the Red Men told, I at length proposed to them, to the men of the tribes with which we had struck hands in peace, to join with us, the Tawny Haired, and march into the south to plunder that land and conquer it. But they said that it might not be; for that many moons ago a great horde of men, white, but

black-haired and black-eyed, had come from the east, fleeing as it was said, from the destruction of their own land which had been overwhelmed by the "Great Water," as the Red Men called the sea. And these men had driven the Red Men northward and occupied their land, which lay adjacent to the land of the Aztalans, with whom these black-haired white men were continually at war; for they were marvelously skillful, having weapons made of a substance like dark gold, but hard as flint and far more durable—like those they said, pointing to our bronze swords and shields, spoils of Atlantis. They had also, said the Red Men, terrible engines with which they flung darts and stones; so that the Aztalans had all they could do to hold their own against them.

Now in this description of the black-haired white men, and their weapons and engines of war, I recognized the men of Atlantis, some horde of whom might well have escaped from the great cataclysm; and my determination to march into the south grew stronger. But first I myself went southward with a chosen war band and accompanied by several chiefs of the Red Men and a band of red warriors who knew all the mountain trails, to spy out the land of these black-haired white men and find out who and what they were.

FOR half a moon we marched southward through the mountains and came at last to the land of the black-haired white men; a fair land of wooded mountains and upland valleys. We entered it—for the Red Men were skilled in scouting as were no other men and from them we had learned to pass unseen—when occasion required it, through a land filled with foes. Watching from ambush outside their villages, unseen and unsuspected by them, I recognized these black-haired white

men as men of Atlantis.

We pushed on, unsuspected, deep into the land, until we came to its chief city; rude, reflecting but the shadow of the glories of Baal-Hissar; yet it seemed stately in our eyes, we being but barbarians. In the midst of it was one building which I felt assured was the temple of Baal-Holuk; and not far distant, its outer wall being a part of the wall of the city, was another building, very massive and strong, which I took to be the dwelling of the chief. Of this we soon had assurance; for lying hidden upon the wooded crest of a cliff that overlooked the place from a distance, we saw at noonday a great procession of priests and warriors in shining armor. In the midst of the warriors, borne aloft on the shoulders of four of them, was a litter-like platform with an uncurtained canopy above it. The litter and the canopy above it was flashing in the sunlight with silver and gold; and beneath the canopy sat a woman in a robe of scarlet and gold whose jeweled headdress was surmounted by plumes of scarlet and gold, whose golden, bejewelled breastplate and arm rings, shone like fire in the sunshine. As I gazed upon the procession my heart leaped with fierce exultation; for my keen eyes, even at the great distance, had recognized in the woman beneath the canopy, Astura, once chieftainess of Baal-Hissar, whose brother and husband I had slain.

Watching the procession as it returned from the temple of Baal-Holuk, I saw Astura's litter borne between lines of warriors into the courtyard of the great building of which the outer wall was part of the wall of the city, facing the east. In this outer wall, fully forty feet above the ground, was an open portal, high and wide, without gate or bar, the purpose of which I could not divine. But it gave me to

think; and thinking I devised a plan. The sight of Astura, triumphant, founding a new Atlantis in this fair land, roused in me the lust of battle; and consulting with Spar-Goran, "Bloody Spear," my first born, and the chiefs of the Red Men with me, valiant men and bold, I resolved ere the dawn of another day to give Astura and her Atlanteans bloody warning that a foe more terrible than the Red Men was at hand.

The enterprise was desperate, daring to the point of rashness; and when I proposed it to the chiefs of the Red Men, they at first would not hear of it; but when I told them, then for the first time, that the sword of Astur which I wore ever at my side had been won from the chief of these black-haired white men in an enterprise far more desperate than this, when they had lived in the land which had sunk beneath the Great Water; and when I had told them proudly that if they were afraid, I and my warriors would go and when we returned to Spar-helan, shame them before their women, they agreed to follow me.

We sought for and found a slender tree, like a pine, which a storm had uprooted. From this we trimmed the branches, leaving the stumps projecting from the trunk, and in the trunk below the branches we cut notches. Then we made a ladder of creeping vines long enough to reach from the portal to the ground. After we had made these preparations we lay in our hiding place waiting for the night to come.

WHEN the sun had sunk into the west and night had come upon the land; and when the absence of lights in the city, save only in the temple of Baal-Holuk, told us that all but the priests were sleeping; we stole down from the cliff and out across the plain in the darkness, for there was no moon.

When we had come to the wall beneath the portal, I placed the trunk of the tree we had brought against the wall, and taking the end of the ladder of vines in my hand climbed upward, using the notches in the trunk of the tree and the stumps of the branches for foot rests, while half a dozen warriors, standing below, held the tree trunk steady.

I reached the portal without any alarm being given and climbed in. The portal, I found, was at the end of a long, pillared corridor which was in darkness, but which led to a court brilliantly lighted in the center of the building. I now held the ladder while the others mounted; and soon within the dark corridor I had assembled five-score warriors, three-score Tawney Haired and two-score Red Men. Enjoining them to silence, I led them toward the lighted court, for the corridor had no doors upon either hand.

Going in advance I came cautiously to the end of the corridor; and then I found that the court to which it led was surrounded by a wide balcony upheld from below by slender stone pillars. At the farther side of the balcony stood an image of Baal-Holuk, so placed that each year, at dawn of the day that marked the beginning of Spring, the first rays of the rising sun shone upon it. But this I knew not as I stood in the corridor in that night hour gazing stealthily forth upon the balcony and the court below; I only learned it later; nor did I know that the morrow's dawn was the dawn of that first day of Spring.

The balcony, upon which many curtained portals opened, was empty; but in the court below the guards were being changed and a patrol of warriors in shining armor that clanked as they moved was marching from post to post, relieving the old guards and placing

new ones. The time was auspicious. Neither the guards nor the sleeping inmates of that vast building had faintest suspicion of a hostile presence within their walls. The surprise would be complete.

Waiting until the patrol had passed out of sight beneath the balcony on the side toward the corridor, I drew the sword of Astur and with it beckoned my warriors to come on. I had seen no stairway leading down from the balcony to the court; but that mattered not, for the slender pillars that supported the balcony furnished an easy means of descent.

Out we rushed upon the balcony and slid down the slender pillars, our war cries mingling with the shouts of dismay of Astura's bodyguards! To rush across the court and hew down the guards at the great portal leading from the building to the outer court, through which I had observed that the patrol entered; to post warriors to hold the portal so that reinforcements from the city might not enter; to hew down the patrol and the guards within the court, was but the work of a few moments; then we prepared to sack the building, while from within it rose shrieks and groans and the screams of women.

On the eastern side of the court, opposite the great portal and the image of Baal-Holuk on the balcony above it, was another smaller portal with golden pillars and scarlet and gold curtains in front of it. Through this I rushed, tearing the curtains down, and—stood before Astura with the sword of Astur in my hand, dripping with the blood of her bodyguards.

She stood among her women just as she had leaped from her couch at the sounds of tumult. They were clad, all of them, in robes of filmy gauze, Astura's gold-threaded, the others silver. They were not like our valiant, fighting

women, these women of Atlantis; but dark, frail, flower-like creatures, glittering with jewels like flowers with morning dew. And Astura recognized me, gazing upon me with eyes wide with horror, as though I had been some monstrous apparition from the world of spirits. In her gaze there was both horror and hatred; and well there might be, for was not I Daarmajd, "The Strong," the mighty, the pitiless, the bane of Astur and of the proud city of Baal-Hissar; preserved, perhaps, from the great cataclysm and the wrath of All-Father God to be her bane also?

The chamber was in darkness, save for the light that shone through the portal, from beyond which came the appalling sounds of laughter. But in that light I could see Astura and her women; and as I advanced with dripping sword, into Astura's eyes came a strange, fierce light, and she did an astounding, ruthless deed. Seizing one of her women she flung her, reeling, staggering toward me, so that had I not swerved it aside, she would have been impaled upon the sword of Astur. But she fell against me, nevertheless, and as I caught her I saw blood streaming from a gaping wound in her back and in Astura's hand a bloody dagger. I laid the girl gently down, and as I did so and stepped across her body, Astura, with a fierce laugh at the dying girl and a curse, like the snarl of a wild beast, for me, rushed to the back of the chamber where the light of the portal reached not, and—disappeared, vanished, even as she had vanished from the balcony in the temple of Holuk in Baal-Hissar.

I FOUND the small, curtained portal through which she had gone and the corridor through which she had fled, but it ended in a blank wall and her vanishing remained, for the time being, a mystery. But her jeweled headdress

and breastplate were left behind for spoil; and my hatred of her mounted as I thought of her ruthless, treacherous deed.

Meanwhile we had enough to do to hold our own, for the city was aroused and warriors by thousands came storming against the walls of Astura's dwelling. Nearly had they burst in by surprise as we had done, for they found the ladder of vines which we had left hanging and swarmed up it; but we discovered them in time and beat them back with slaughter. But still our situation seemed well nigh desperate, for we were hemmed within the building, all retreat cut off, every window a mark for arrows and the warriors of Atlantis swarming to plant ladders against the walls as fast as we flung them down. All night we battled desperately and many a warrior of Atlantis, swarming up the ladders, tasted death on point of sword and spear, or was crushed when the ladders were flung down. We had taken the swords and shields from the dead guards and used them well, the latter so well that but few among us were wounded and none were slain.

Then came the dawn and nearly our undoing. For as the first rays of the sun, shining through the long corridor, struck upon the image of Baal-Holuk standing upon the balcony opposite the opening, the golden image, incrustated with jewels, shone as with living fire, and like living fire shone the jeweled eyes, glaring down upon the warriors who rested in the court—I held the walls with half my men while the other rested—so that they cried out in terror that the spirit of the terrible god had entered into the image and would destroy us all. Well might panic have ensued had not I, Daarmajd, "The Strong," the fearless, climbed swiftly upon the balcony and

picking up the image in my arms—five strong men today might scarcely lift such a weight—hurled it down upon the floor of the court. Then climbing down after it I shouted to my warriors that the power of Baal-Holuk was naught, that the hand of All-father god was over us and naught could prevail against Him; and taking advantage of the enthusiasm begotten by words and my daring in defying Baal-Holuk, I led them in a sortie that gave the Atlanteans pause and left the pavement in front of the great portal strewn with their dead and dying.

It was during that sortie that the thought came to me which proved our salvation. For as we retreated through the great portal, I caught sight of Astura, borne upon a litter, urging on her warriors. Now that she had gotten out of her dwelling was certain; where she had gotten out so might we, could we only find the place. All day, therefore, during intervals of the fighting, I examined and tested every stone of that corridor through which Astura had escaped until I found the secret—a great stone that turned as on a pivot, giving access to a stairway leading downward. This stairway led to a tunnel, which in turn led to an opening beneath the high and steep bank of a brook within an hundred yards of the city walls. Having explored it swiftly, I returned and told my warriors that a way of retreat was open and that we could take it as soon as darkness fell.

But ere darkness fell we had to endure another and most terrible assault of all. And in it I saw Astura, borne upon her litter, urging on her warriors, cursing them that they could not prevail against the handful of heroes who held her dwelling and set them and her at defiance. That last assault ended as night came, after which the At-

lanteans fell back, forced to be content that they had us hemmed in, as they thought, and could starve us into submission at last.

Then we gathered together the spoil of gold and jewels, pried all the jewels from the image of Baal-Holuk and defiled it, slew our most desperately wounded that they might not fall alive into the hands of the Atlanteans and retreated through the tunnel bearing the remainder of our wounded and each warrior a precious load of spoil.

DESPITE that we were deadly weary from a night and day of fighting, we marched all that night, and the next day lay hidden in the forest. So, marching by night and hiding by day, we escaped from the land of the Atlanteans and returned to our own people in Spar-helan.

Many a boastful tale we told and song we chanted by the campfires upon our return. And the warriors who had not been upon the foray looked with wonder and greed upon the richness of the spoil and clamored to be led where more could be had with much joy of fighting. Nor had I done with Astura and her Atlanteans, the more so that news was brought me that she had struck hands with the Aztalans and made alliance with them against us, telling them that we would assuredly come against her land again, and that if we conquered it their turn would be next; and urging them to forestall us by joining with her and attacking us first. She was a wise woman and a valiant, though with no stomach for fighting in her own person, nor to say truth, the strength for it; but she could make others fight and the Aztalans hearkened to her words.

BUT I was not one to wait to be attacked; and six moons later I

marched southward with a mighty host of the Tawney Haired and the Red Men. We swept the Atlanteans back from their borders, back to the valley in which stood their chief city. And there we routed Astura and her Aztalan allies and stormed the city and sacked it. Of the Atlanteans only Astura escaped with a remnant of her people and her warriors, taking refuge in the land of the Aztalans. We ravaged and burned the country of the Atlanteans, I and my host of Tawney Haired and Red Men, until naught human was left living within its borders. Then we returned to the mountains of Spar-helan, the warriors to secure their plunder and I to meditate upon our subjugation of Iztahuacan and the seven cities of Aztalans.

Astura was right, it was their turn next.

CHAPTER VIII

How Daarmajd Stormed the Sacred City of Iztahuacan and Became Lord of the Seven Cities of Aztalan

ELAINE and Varjeon had quarreled.

I did not know the cause of the quarrel, but I suspected that Count Zangarelli was the subject of it. Varjeon in his blunt, straightforward way, had probably demanded an explanation of the Count's quite obvious attentions to Elaine and her apparent acceptance of them; and Elaine had, naturally, resented it. At any rate, the quarrel seemed quite serious, for Varjeon and Elaine no longer saw each other, save for unavoidable meetings at the houses of common friends and at parties, etc. The fault I suspected was Varjeon's, for he is the last man in the world to make advances after having been once snubbed. Worst of all, Elaine had absented herself from the Thanksgiving

Day Chicago-Princeton game, despite the fact that she was a football enthusiast and the game had been played at Stagg Field in Chicago. What made it the cruelest cut of all was that it was Varjeon's last game in football. He would graduate the following spring.

The consequence was that I saw rather more than usual of Varjeon. Scarcely an evening passed that he did not come to my rooms, to smoke and find solace, I fancy, in the rich silences of our communion. Not that he played the misanthrope or disconsolate lover. He is far too sensible and matter of fact for that sort of thing. He takes standing and with a smile whatever blows may come his way, whether they be physical or the crueller ones Fate deals in.

He came to my rooms on the evening following the Chicago-Princeton game, or, rather, on the morning after, for he did not arrive until twelve-thirty A.M. He remarked that he was tired but not sleepy. I replied that I was neither tired nor sleepy; and having thus adjusted the matter of personal convenience, we smoked for some time in silence. And then:

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THE land (he said) that the Atlanteans had occupied was a pleasant land of wooded mountains and fair upland valleys; fairer by far than was Spar-helan with its bare, rocky crags and dark abysmal ravines; and after the great battle and harrying we, the Tawney Haired, and the Red Men, our allies, marched into it and dwelt in it. We occupied the ruined cities and villages and dwelt in them, for their fire-blackened walls still stood and they were places of great strength, well chosen as to locations. But my firstborn and I dwelt not under any roof, nor had we done so since the death of Khota-Laj, but camped beneath the sky with a

band of three-score chosen warriors.

Spar-Goran was the name of my first-born, which means "Bloody Spear;" and no warrior, save I, Daarmajd, "The Strong," could hew his way through the ranks of battle as could he. Tall and straight and graceful as a mountain pine; and his face, comely and fair, reminded me of his mother.

Fair was the land and pleasant, but I was not minded that my people should learn to love it too well; and to that end I led them upon many a foray into Aztalantepec, which was the name by which the Aztalans called their land. And so my people came not to love the land in which they dwelt too well for thinking upon the riches and plunder of Aztalantepec.

Truly the land of the Aztalans was a fair land and a wondrous land; a great rolling plain shut in by mountains, with its seven mighty cities and many lesser towns, all surrounded by cultivated fields; for the Aztalans had learned to till the soil and were even more skilled therein than the Atlanteans. Their land has passed away, the face of it changed by mighty cataclysms that came after, but probably where it once was lies today the Valley of Mexico.

Ranging the mountains that bounded the fair land upon the north I, Daarmajd, "The Strong," the mighty, and Spar-Goran, my firstborn, looked down upon it with fierce, hungry eyes; and returned from each foray into it more determined than ever to conquer and rule it. I was not the mere savage barbarian I had been. From Khota-Laj I had learned much of wisdom and true rulership and of cunning policy; and Spar-Goran had inherited from her much of what today we call statecraft. We meant not merely to ravage and destroy, but to rule. Lying upon the mountain side beneath the stars, we took counsel together how it might be

done. Out of our counsel arose the conviction that Iztahuacan, the sacred city, was the heart of that land and that if it should be conquered all rest of the land would submit and pay us tribute.

All the more was I resolved to conquer the land of Aztalantepec because I knew that Astura and the remnant of the Atlantans dwelt there, and that Astura would never cease from stirring them up against us. Rumors I had heard that Astura had bowed down to the Serpent god and sworn upon his altar in Iztahuacan that one day his priests should tear my heart from my body and offer it as a sacrifice upon his altar. Well I knew that she went from city to city among them endeavoring to stir them up to gather the hosts of all their cities—hosts numberless as the leaves of the forest—and march into the mountains of the north to sweep me and my people from the earth, telling them that never could they dwell in safety while I lived. And it came to my knowledge that she had even voyaged to the Islands of the West, seeking aid of the Yellow Men who dwelt there; telling them that should I, Daarmajd, "The Strong," and the wild men of the north, as she called us, conquer Aztalantepec and reach the western sea, not even the sea itself would protect them from our ravage. All of which made me resolve to strike first, for I believed that if I did not she would marshal even the wild beasts of the forest against me, so terrible was her hatred.

SO IT befell that when the time of cold had passed, and the rains had ceased, and the sun had come up from the south so that at noonday it stood almost at the zenith, I gathered a mighty host of the Tawney Haired and the Red Men and marched down from the mountain passes like a torrent in springtime. Spar-Goran led the van-

guard, while I followed closely with the main body, keeping the host well in hand, for well I knew that stern fighting was ahead of us. By day we marched beneath the murk that rolled up from the southward; and by night we camped in the glare of flames that told of the march of Spar-Goran. The march was swift, the attack sudden, so that we came before the walls of Iztahuacan ere the host of the Aztalans had time to gather.

We camped around the walls of the city so that through the four gates that fronted north and south and east and west, no man might pass. Then I sent out war bands to foray and gather in the crops that were yet in the fields, for there had not been time to gather them into the cities and town, so sudden had been our onset. And in the brief time I had gathered a vast store of food into my camp before the city.

Meanwhile my scouts brought me word that a mighty host was gathering from all the cities and towns of the Aztalans to march to the relief of the sacred city and drive us back to our mountains or else annihilate us. I also heard that Astura was traversing the land from city to city, telling the Aztalans that the Serpent god had delivered me into their hands and urging them to seize this opportunity to rid their land forever from the menace of the wild men of the north. She had a warrior's soul if not a warrior's body; and she counseled them to send bands to seize the mountain passes and cut off our retreat, while their main host hemmed us in beneath the walls of Iztahuacan and destroyed us.

But ere the main host had time to gather there was dire hunger within the walls of the sacred city; for the standing crops had not been gathered in and the food from the previous year had been largely consumed during the time

of cold; and depending upon the people's hunger and the eagerness to get food it would breed in them, I laid my plans. I brought all the food that had been gathered by my foraying bands into one place upon a low hill that fronted the western gate of the city; and this hill I fortified with stakes and mounds of earth, doing everything within plain sight of the famished warriors upon the walls. So inflamed were they with the pangs of hunger that they made a sortie in an endeavor to seize that hill before it should be fully fortified; but we beat them back easily and with slaughter.

Then I called in all my foraying war bands and when my scouts brought me word that the host of the Aztalans was near at hand, marching up from the south to battle, I placed a sufficient garrison in the fortified camp upon the hill, bidding the warriors to keep out of sight behind the stakes and mounds of earth; and within a thick grove that lay to the north between the hill and the city I placed Spar-Goran in ambush with a thousand picked warriors. All this I did in the night, under cover of darkness; and in the dark hour before dawn I set fire to all my camps around the city, save only the one upon the hill, and marched away southward with the host, as if to meet the host of the Aztalans. But no sooner were we out of sight behind a low range of hills a short distance to the southward, than I halted the host and awaited the sounds of battle and the blast of Spar-Goran's horn, made from the horn of a great bison.

All befell as I had hoped and expected. For when the famished warriors of Iztahuacan saw us march away in the glare of the flames of our burning camps, they rushed forth in a disorderly swarm to seize the camp upon the hill before the flames should reach

it, for there was the food for which they were famished. Then Spar-Goran issued forth from the grove with his thousand warriors and rushed to the onset with the battle yell of the Tawney Haired, cutting in between the disorderly swarm and the gate of the city which stood open, men and women and children still issuing from it. He seized the gate before it could be closed; and held it; though the warriors of Iztahuacan, when they realized the trap into which their unwariness had led them, strove with desperate valor to retrieve the disaster. But though they rushed by thousands to regain the gate, Spar-Goran and his warriors beat them back and blocked the portal with their slain. Ah, he was a warrior of warriors, Spar-Goran, true son of Khota-Laj, worthy to lead the host of the Tawney Haired when I, Daarmajd, should be gone! Bloody indeed was his spear in that red dawn, and his battle yell rang with a note of fierce triumph above the sound of the conflict!

BUT down from the hill came the garrison, attacking the warriors of Iztahuacan in the rear; and up from the south came I, Daarmajd, and the host of the Tawney Haired and the Red Men; and long ere the sun had climbed from the eastern hills up to the zenith the sacred city was won.

Nor that only. For when Spar-Goran and I, Daarmajd, at the head of a strong band of warriors, reached the central square of the city where was a great pyramid with the temple of the Serpent god upon its summit, there came winding down from the pyramid a long procession of priests clad in black robes, and at their head the priest-ruler, the sacred one. When the procession reached the square they all knelt down, the sacred one at their head, with hands outstretched, palms upward, in suppli-

cation. In former days they would have been hewed down where they knelt; but I had learned wisdom from Khota-Laj. I raised the Priest-Ruler, the Sacred One, and embraced him and motioned for them all to rise. Then I told them through an interpreter, a chief of the Red Men, that their city should be preserved from sack; that the temple of the Serpent god should not be defiled; and that the Sacred One should still rule, under me, Daarmajd "The Strong," over all Aztalantepec that should submit. The Sacred One prostrated himself at my feet and kissed them, and the priests raised a hymn to the Serpent god that I took to be of rejoicing. Then all the warriors of Iztahuacan flung down their weapons and submitted; and I forbade all sack of the city save what had taken place in the storming.

Swift runners were sent to the advancing host bearing tidings of the storming of Iztahuacan and the submission of the Sacred One, also that the temple of the Serpent god would be respected and the Sacred One still rule the land under the conquerors; and bidding the host to return to their cities. This they all did, saving only Astura and her Atlanteans who were with the host, and some few of the Aztalans who refused to obey. These, as I learned, fled far southward to the land of the Cui-Chakquis. And from that land was to come in later time a storm of Astura's brewing.

Thus I became Lord of the Seven Cities of Aztalantepec. I planted strong garrisons in each city and caused all weapons to be given up, leaving to the Aztalans only the implements with which they tilled their fields and the tools which they used in their arts. For in many things they were skilled beyond the understanding or ability of my wild warriors.

CHAPTER IX

How the Aztalans Rose Against Daarmajd
and Were Aided by Hordes of Yellow Men
from the Islands of the West

THE Christmas Holidays held for Varjeon but little prospect of the conventional joy of the season, or so it seemed to me. None of his family were in the city: his father, Major General T. J. J. Varjeon in Europe, supposedly on a mission for the United States government; his elder sisters married; his elder brother, an engineer, in South America. His mother had been dead for many years. The absence of any of his family might not have meant very much, for Varjeon was used to being thrown upon his own resources; but Elaine Scrymgeour was another matter. Their quarrel, or at least their tacit agreement to continue to agree to disagree, still continued; and I was worried, selfishly, I must admit. What effect would their quarrel have upon the "race memories" in which I was so deeply interested? That they were in some way connected with his feeling for Elaine I was almost sure; and if they had broken up permanently, well . . .

That they should come to an end would, I felt, be calamitous, not merely as a prehistoric record but for their effect upon research into the mysteries of the human mind.

I determined to put some of my ideas to the test by removing him from the familiar surroundings that had hitherto, perhaps, evoked his "memories." I, therefore, suggested that we spend the Christmas Holidays together in a hunting lodge in Northern Michigan that a friend had placed at my disposal whenever I cared to use it. Varjeon fell in with my suggestion, with pleasure I thought, and we arrived

at the lodge on Christmas Eve, having been driven over from the village, ten miles away, in a wooden sledge which also brought our provisions, blankets and other equipment. Darkness had fallen before we had got ourselves settled; we had cooked and eaten a late supper and were seated, pipes alight, before a roaring fire that served for both light and warmth. It had snowed the day before and the weather had cleared only that morning with a drop in temperature to below zero. The wind that had blown from the west all day had died down at sunset and darkness had come with the stillness of a windless night in the northern woods. Presently the rising moon would lend to the forest an eerie, ghostly charm, tempting us with beauty to brave the cold and the timber wolves whose howling, now far now near, was the only sound that broke the stillness.

* * *

THOSE are but puppy dogs (said Varjeon presently, as a howl rose startlingly near the cabin) compared to the wolves that ranged the mountains and valleys of Spar-helan. Many of them did we slay when the Tawney Haired dwelt in those mountains; and I, Daarmajd, caused my band of picked warriors to wear their pelts, with the head portion drawn over their heads like a hood and the pelt hanging from their shoulders and belted in at the waist.

And when I had conquered Aztalan-tepec and become Lord of the Seven Cities I caused cunning artisans of the Aztalans to fashion for us helmets shaped like wolf heads, with teeth and fangs of shining gold and jewels for eyes, so that when we drew the wolf skin over them, with the wolf pelts belted round our bodies, we resembled ravening wolves in appearance as well as nature. Nor did I, Daarmajd, or

Spar-Goran, my firstborn, or our band of picked warriors sleep beneath roof even in Iztahuacan; but abode beneath the sky upon the flat roof of the great citadel that I caused the Aztalans to build for us in the quarter of the city which I reserved for the Tawney Haired. The Red Men, our allies, dwelt not within walls at all, but camped in the open country.

In each of the seven cities I caused a quarter to be set apart for the dwellings of the Tawney Haired and a citadel to be built to defend it; and within the quarters thus assigned to them I forbade the warriors of the Tawney Haired to bring women of the Aztalans; nor might the children of those women be numbered among the Tawney Haired even though our warriors were their fathers. Nor would alien women or their children have been safe amongst us for our valiant women were jealous of their men. We were a conquering race overwhelmingly outnumbered in a hostile land, even though the Aztalans were outwardly submissive, and I had no mind that our valor should be diluted by mingling with a lesser breed on any terms save those of conquerors.

To the end that my warriors might not become soft and effeminate amid the luxuries of Aztalantepec I prescribed a constant succession of marches and warlike games, enjoining upon them to live simply and hardily, as became warriors and fighting men; so that though a warrior might bedeck himself with gold and jewels, yet his food was on the simplest and he slept upon a mat spread upon bare stones. Though I permitted them to carouse upon the strong drink that the Aztalans knew how to make, yet he who permitted himself to be overcome by it, so that he fell to the ground, had a spear through his breast and arose therefrom

no more.

Then when I had done all things to my liking and held the land in a firm grip, I led the war bands through the passes of the mountains and down to the Western Sea, leaving strong garrisons behind. There I had a fleet of war boats built, compelling the Aztalans to labor upon them, and voyaged forth to foray upon the Islands of the West.

There we met the Yellow Men for the first time. Valiant they were and much joy of fighting we had among them. Terribly cruel they were also, sacrificing men and women and children to their gods and eating human flesh as a part of their religion. Though not tall, they were strong, broad-shouldered, deep-chested, yellow of skin and fierce of countenance, black-haired, black-eyed. They dwelt in walled cities, though the walls were neither so high nor so strong as the walls of the cities of the Aztalans were, or those of the Atlanteans had been. Many of them we took by storm and sacked. Usually they were built upon the sides of mountains, for there were many mountains in the Islands of the West; and the mountain tops above the cities were ringed around with great stone images of their gods—many gods and strange. The Islands of the West have long since sunk beneath the sea; and their cities and the memory of them have been forgotten. Only at Easter Island one of the ancient mountain tops still thrusts its head above the waters, a puzzle to archaeologists, with its great stone images looking forth over the desolate ocean.

AFTER the first great foray it was Spar-Goran who led forth the war bands to harry the Islands of the West; for it was necessary that I, Daarmajd, should hold the land of Aztalantepec

firmly under my hand. Well I knew that for all their quietude and submission they hated us, their conquerors, and at the first sign of weakness, the first relaxation of vigilance, they would rise against us. I strengthened the fortifications of our quarters in the cities, therefore, and by stern discipline kept the warriors of the Tawney Haired fit and ready for battle; and I saw to it that the younger warriors had plenty of experience of stern fighting against the Yellow Men of the Islands of the West. Also I added to the equipment of the warriors—to axe and spear—the swords of tempered bronze that we had taken among the spoil of the Atlanteans. Of these the supply was limited, however, for the Aztalans, no more than we, possessed the secret of tempering bronze. And I made the warriors also practice constantly with the bow and arrow, for I knew that the time might come when we would need every advantage of weapons as well as valor.

Well I foresaw the day when all the hordes of the south and the Islands of the West—yellow men as well as brown men—might rise against us en masse, when we should have to fight not merely for dominion or the joy of fighting, but for our very existence. Yet was I not only wise and wary and valiant, but I tried also to be just; imposing not upon the conquered people burdens past bearing; respecting their gods, especially their great Serpent god, forbidding them only to sacrifice human beings upon his altars; for though I, Daarmajd, and my Tawney Haired warriors loved war above all things and considered slaughter in battle glorious, yet we loved not to see helpless beings put to death, unless it were in the hot fury of battle and pillage, or for vengeance, as when we had wiped out the Brown Men of the Mountains.

And the day that I had long foreseen came on apace. And as I had also foreseen, it was Astura the Atlantean, the vengeful chieftainess of Baal-Hissar, who was the immediate cause of the storm bursting upon us.

When I had stormed Iztahuacan and compelled the submission of the Seven Cities of Aztalantepec, Astura had fled into the south, to the far land of Cui-Chakqui, where she had found refuge and a welcome. But her restless, vengeful spirit could not be still. Ever she importuned the Cui-Chakquis for aid to deliver the Aztalans from my rule and drive the Wild Men of the North, as she called us, back to their mountain dens again. Ever she warned them that though their land was a far land and their cities strong, yet never might they dwell in security until I, Daarmajd, "The Strong," the mighty, the pitiless, was destroyed.

But for some years, as I learned, for I was wary and watchful, they paid her no heed. During those years she voyaged again to the Islands of the West and bade the Yellow Men remember how she had warned them; and behold, now it had come to pass as she had foretold, for I had come down to the Western Sea and ever and anon their coasts were aflame with fires lighted by my Tawney Haired ravagers. Then the Yellow Men listened and said that she was a wise woman and that they had been fools; but they swore by their bloody gods that they would be fools no longer. After which she returned to Cui-Chakqui and was nearly captured on the voyage by Spar-Goran returning from a foray beyond the sea. Only the coming of night and darkness upon the sea saved her.

For many moons I knew that a storm was coming. There was restlessness among the people, subdued but

unmistakable, as if they waited upon an event. Signs and portents there were also. A great, flaming star appeared in the sky, so bright and fierce that it was seen at noonday; the rains failed and the heat of the sun increased so that the crops were burnt and the land quivered beneath it. Faithful chieftains among the Red Men came to me in secret and told me that a wise woman among them had prophesied that calamity would overtake them unless they returned to their mountains; and they said that day by day bands of the Red Men were stealing away northward in spite of all they could do to restrain them. And Spar-Goran with a great host of young warriors was absent upon a foray among the Islands of the West.

THEN upon a day came runners bearing news that a host from Cui-Chakqui had stormed the mountain passes of the south and slaughtered the garrisons. And that Astura was with them was a part of their tidings. To the cities of the Aztalans came that news even more quickly than to me and, as if at a signal, the land rose against us. But I was not taken unawares; neither was I daunted. Rather, my heart filled with fierce joy, for now there would be fighting worthy of warriors. The quarters of the Tawney Haired in the Aztalan cities held great stores of food, gathered against such a time; and I had little fear but that my garrisons would hold out until my plans had been matured. For I had planned a vengeance bloody and terrible against such a time of revolt—a vengeance that should be remembered when the Tawney Haired and Aztalan were no more.

To all the garrisons of the cities I sent swift runners from among the Red Men who were faithful, bidding them be of good cheer and worthily uphold

the fame of the Tawney Haired for valor. Also I sent a messenger in a swift war boat to Spar-Goran across the Western Sea, bidding him return, for a fight was on that would glut his lust for battle and glory.

When the Aztalans of Iztahuacan attacked us in our quarter, we were not taken by surprise, but beat them back with ease. But up from the south came the host of the Cui-Chakqui and Astura and her Atlanteans with them; and from all the seven cities came the hosts of the Aztalans, leaving behind only sufficient numbers to hold my garrisons in check. This was as I had hoped for and expected; and though they stormed against the walls of our quarter night and day, I and my warriors beat them back with slaughter and awaited the return of Spar-Goran. Then came to me news unexpected and terrible, which was that great hordes of the Yellow Men were landing upon the western coast; and ere long they appeared among our attackers. Then grew my heart heavy within me, for I thought that Spar-Goran had been defeated and slain.

Heavy grew my heart; and then heart and brain began to burn as with a fire that only blood could quench. I summoned my chieftains around me and told them that Spar-Goran would never come, that he had been overwhelmed by numbers and slain; and that upon the morrow's dawn we would sally forth and fight until we died as became warriors of the Tawney Haired. They heard the news of Spar-Goran's death in grim silence and then, when I told them what I intended to do, there burst from their throats a hoarse, fierce shout.

Red came that dawn above the eastern mountains. We were mustered before the gate and our valiant women were about to slay their children too

young to fight, that they might not fall alive into the hands of the foe. But they did not. No! We sallied forth not to despair and defeat but to victory!

Suddenly through that red dawn rang out the blast of a horn, a blast I knew—Spar-Goran's signal of onset! And above the shouts of dismay of the hostile host rang out the battle yell of the Tawney Haired! Then we sallied forth with a furious shout of triumph, carrying to the Aztalans and their allies the red death that lies on edge of axe and point of spear. Surprised, daunted, panic stricken by the fury of the onset front and rear, the hostile host broke. Some fled outright; some, caught between the two onsets, fought but to escape; others, the warriors of Iztahuacan, fought furiously in their streets, back, back to the great pyramid and the temple of the Serpent god. We stormed up the steps of the pyramid and when we reached the top hewed down the priests that had rallied there. I sprang to the temple portal where, before the image of the Serpent god, knelt the Priest-Ruler, the Sacred One, his hands outstretched, palms upward, in supplication. I seized him and, raising him high above my head, hurled him down the side of the pyramid, and then, lifting the image of the Serpent god, hurled it after him.

We fired the city and gave it up to sack and its people to slaughter; we drove the host of the Aztalans, and of Cui-Chakqui and the Yellow Men in bloody rout across the plain; and when the sun went down above the mountains I stood beside Spar-Goran looking upon the smoking ruins of Iztahuacan, the sacred city, and swore by All-father god that even as it was, so ere long, should all Aztalantepec be.

We kept that oath, Spar-Goran and I. All the more we kept it when we

learned of the treachery of the Aztalans, how for many moons they had been preparing for revolt, plotting with Astura and the Cui-Chakquis and the Yellow Men, with caches of weapons furnished by their allies concealed against the coming of the day.

When I lay down upon the plain to sleep that night by the side of Spar-Goran, my heart was filled with pride and joy; for he had told me how he had outwitted the Yellow Men and cut off one of their war fleets, reddening the sea with the blood of their slain; and then, reaching the western coast, had crossed the mountains by an unguarded defile and marched swiftly across the plain to hurl his warriors against the hostile host at Iztahuacan.

CHAPTER X

How Daarmajd Harried the Seven Cities with Fire and Sword

CHRISTMAS Day dawned clear, crisp, bitterly cold, our thermometer reading ten below zero at noon. Within the lodge, however, it was warm and cheery enough, for it was well built; and upon our arrival the previous afternoon we had chopped a big log from a fallen pine that kept our fire through the night. After breakfast of flapjacks, beans, bacon and steaming hot coffee, we went out on the lake, built a fire on the ice and busied ourselves making a hole to fish through. Consequently, when we returned to the lodge about midafternoon, we brought the fish course—a three-pound pickerel—for our Christmas Dinner. We had brought along our turkey, with the ingredients for dressing, canned vegetables and a plum pudding; and I ventured my hand at making hot biscuits and cranberry sauce with pretty fair success; so that the repast we sat

down to an hour after sunset, lacked nothing that a pair of ravenous appetites might not overlook.

When the dishes had been cleared away and washed we sat before our fire and smoked.

I had by this time become habituated to expecting that in moments of relaxation like these Varjeon would lapse into the semi-trancelike state in which race memories of elder time came to the surface of his mind, like ancient fLOTSAM upon still waters. So naturally did he fall into this state, so normal did he seem while in it, that I could scarcely realize that he was unaware of what he had told me until I read my notes to him later; but I became more and more convinced that the narrations of Daarmajd were really his "own race memories" of another life. And more and more I came to realize that these "race memories" were precious; and that I was privileged to listen to chapters from the history of man upon the earth, long hidden, long forgotten, from the lips of one who had been an actor and a leader in them.

Although I had never quite overcome the awe I felt in the presence of this astonishing mental phenomenon, yet it was without surprise that I heard Varjeon, or was it not rather Daarmajd begin to speak?

* * *

AFTER the sack and destruction of Iztahuacan, I harried the Seven Cities and all the land of Aztalantepec with fire and sword. My garrisons had held out and they opened the gates of the cities to me; and all the land lay wailing beneath the red murk of the flames the Tawney Haired kindled. As gradually I learned the full extent of the conspiracy of the Aztalans, and the Cui-Chakquis, and the Yellow Men against the Tawney Haired, cold, pitiless fury possessed me and I spared neither age

nor sex; and I laughed with grim joy when I learned that with the lamentations of the Aztalans for the ruin of their land, the name of Astura rose to heaven coupled with curses because it was through her plottings and intrigues that this destruction had come upon them.

I stormed the mountain passes of the south and west and drove the Yellow Men down to the sea and the Cui-Chakquis southward. Then I held the passes with strong war bands, in order to give me time for the work of destruction in Aztalantepec. I set at defiance the gods whose aid they invoked against me—the gods of the Yellow Men, and the great Serpent god of the Aztalans, and all their lesser gods. I burned their temples and made them funeral pyres for their priests, and flung the images of their gods and their altars from the summits of their pyramids. I marched swiftly into the south through mountains and jungles at the head of a host of chosen warriors; and struck the Cui-Chakquis in their homeland and filled it with wailing.

But the time I gained was but a respite, for the hate of Astura was indefatigable, immortal. Despite the defeats of the allies and the destruction of Aztalantepec, her spirit rose superior to disaster. She reanimated the courage of the allies after defeat and urged them on with demoniac eloquence to destroy the hated Wild Men of the North now, or else bow down to their dominion and be their slaves forever.

While I was absent in the south, harrying the land of Cui-Chakqui, she rallied the remnant of the Aztalans—stilling their curses with her eloquence—and the Yellow Men, of whom fresh hordes were landing constantly upon the western coast, and led them against the host of the Tawney Haired, concentrated by my orders in the passes of the

southern mountains to cover my retreat. And when I returned I saw the camp fires of my foes burning along the northern horizon, as numerous as stars in the Milky Way. Now I learned that the last of the Red Men had deserted me, some of them joining my foes and the rest retreating through the passes of the northern mountains; so that I foresaw that even should I defeat the host that confronted me, I might find the northern passes held by hostile Red Men, barring the retreat I meditated to the fastnesses of Spar-helan.

I knew that I might not meet the host of the allies upon the plain, for they outnumbered the Tawney Haired ten to one; therefore I withdrew through the passes of the south, leaving them undefended; and when Astura, knowing that a host of Cui-Chakquis was following me up from the south to avenge the harrying of their land, urged the allies to follow me in haste, hoping to take the Tawney Haired between the two hosts and annihilate them, I turned upon them in the narrow defiles of the mountains, where their numbers were of little avail, but only brought them to confusion.

By thousands I slaughtered them, giving them so terrible a check that they wavered and fell back. Then leaving Spar-Goran and a chosen band of picked warriors to keep our campfires lighted and deceive the foe, afterward following on our traces to guard the rear against attack, I stole away eastward through the mountains and descending to the plain through a distant, unguarded pass, marched northward so rapidly that I had gained three marches upon them ere they were aware of our escape. But they followed on like wolves after a wounded bison, Astura cheering them on, telling them that the Red Men had turned against us and would hold the northern passes

while the host of the Yellow Men, and the Aztalans and the Cui-Chakquis who had come up from the south, overwhelmed us upon the plain.

It was even as she told them. The hostile Red Men held the passes of the northern mountains. All the peoples of the world had risen against us and were bent upon our destruction. Yet even in that hour of impending doom the courage of the Tawney Haired shone bright as sunshine on a burnished shield; and the audacity of their chieftain, I, Daar-majd, "The Strong," the mighty, the pitiless and the dauntless, rose to new heights of craft and daring.

THOUGH the Red Men held the mountain passes, yet were they loath to fight with us, for they believed that we were invincible, and the "Great Spirit," whom we called All-Father god, held us under His protection. So they sent messengers to offer, for a great bribe, to allow us to pass through the mountains unmolested. But I suspected treachery, and while still holding them in parley, led the warriors of the Tawney Haired to storm the two main passes through the northern mountains. We carried them with axe and spear and point of sword; and when the host of the allies came up from the south, confronted them in a position of such strength that they dared not attack us. Still our position seemed desperate, for the Red Men, vengeful now, were gathering upon our rear.

But even in that dark hour I did not despair, nor did Spar-Goran, my valiant firstborn. There was forming in my mind, indeed, a plan so audacious, so daring that none could foresee it, a plan that should not only overwhelm the foe and fill their hearts with terror, but should also glut our hearts' lust for vengeance on the Yellow Men, without whose aid Aztalan and Cui-Chakqui

might have assailed us in vain.

I divided the host into two parts, and leaving the smaller part under Spar-Goran to hold the mountain passes and give aid when needful, I marched by night westward along the mountains and descending to the plain by a narrow defile attacked the host of the allies by surprise in the dark hour before dawn. And as soon as Spar-Goran heard the sounds of onset and saw the flames arising from the camps of the foe which we had fired, he came rushing like a torrent down from the mountains. And before the shock of his onset the allied host gave way utterly and we drove them in rout across the plain.

Then, before they could rally, we marched swiftly westward across the plain and swept down through the passes of the western mountains to the sea. The Yellow Men left to guard the passes and the fleets of war boats drawn up upon the beaches, we gave to slaughter. Few they were in number, for they had thought that we, the Tawney Haired, were hemmed in and doomed.

As many of the war boats as were necessary to carry the host of the Tawney Haired we launched upon the sea; and the rest we burned upon the beaches in order that none might follow us until new ones could be built. Then we set forth across the Western Sea, bearing doom to the homes of the Yellow Men.

For many moons we harried the coasts of the Islands of the West, so that the smoke of their burning cities dimmed the sun by day, and by night the sky was all aglow with lurid murk from the flames we kindled. And our hearts were glad within us as we launched our war boats again upon the sea, for when the hordes of the Yellow Men returned, if ever they did return, it would be to ruined cities and a desolate land.

CHAPTER XI

How Daarmajd Humbled Astura and Retreated Northward

WE DID not, of course, receive any mail, nor see a newspaper during our stay in the Northern Michigan woods. It was not, therefore, until our return to Chicago on January 3rd that we learned through the newspapers of the approaching departure of the Scrymgeours for Europe, for a sojourn on the Riviera, Italy and Spain. This news seemed like a death blow to any hopes Varjeon may have entertained of a reconciliation with Elaine; and the announcement that Count Zangarelli and Dona Inez Santa Ana would depart for the same destination, the Riviera, at or about the same time, seemed to give the news added significance. That Varjeon felt that the departure of the Scrymgeours meant a definite break in his friendship with Elaine I knew, though he said nothing about it.

One afternoon early in January he came to my rooms at the St. George. He had been studying rather hard to recover ground lost during the football season and I was giving him a bit of coaching. This evening, however, he seemed moody and preoccupied and we laid work aside and lighted our pipes early.

"She was beautiful," he said presently, "beautiful even when age had crept upon her, but the intensity of long nourished hate made her terrible, awe-inspiring."

Glancing up I realized that Daarmajd was speaking.

* * *

I, DAARMAJD, and my Tawney Haired people were the objects of Astura's immemorial hate, hate all the greater, I think, because from the day of the storming of Baal-Hissar we had

added to head-long valor a craft that overmatched her own.

Well I knew when I and my Tawney Haired warriors burst like a storm upon the Islands of the West, after routing the allied host at the foot of the northern mountains, that Astura would use all the persuasion of her eloquence to hold the allies to the work of our destruction, even making the valor through which we were so terrible, an argument for holding the Aztalans and Cui-Chakquis and Yellow Men together, because what one or two might not be able to accomplish they all together could do by sheer weight of overwhelming number. Also I knew that ere long the Yellow Men would build war boats and come across the sea to rescue their homes; and perhaps the Aztalans and Cui-Chakquis would come with them. I had no mind to be taken thus between two hosts, for the Yellow Men remaining in the islands still fought us fiercely; and besides, my people needed rest and repose, respite from the toil of marching and fighting. Therefore I gathered them together in good time, to a rendezvous off the coast of a great island of which the Hawaiian Islands are a remnant today; and when my swift-scouting war boats brought me word that the host of the Yellow Men was ready to put to sea, I set forth across the sea to the northeastward and eluded them.

Where the Californian Gulf is today extended in those old times a narrow sea much farther northward than the present gulf, islanding the land that was its western shore as far northward as the Golden Gate, which was then the northern entrance to the narrow sea.

Now the Yellow Men were perfectly familiar with the coasts of their own island and also with the coast of the mainland to eastward; but with these northern regions they were not famil-

iar; for the long island that bounded the narrow sea upon the west was an empty land, as was also the Land of Nebu, which lay to the east, since the harrying of the Brown Men of the Mountains. Now we of the Tawney Hair had discovered the narrow sea when driven northward by storms in our forays upon the Islands of the West. We, therefore, made for the strait of the narrow sea through which it connected with the ocean toward the south. Passing through the strait, we voyaged northward until we came to the mouth of a great gulf, almost a sea in itself, which opened out of the narrow sea and extended far to the northeastward among the mountains of the Land of Nebu. Upon the shore of the gulf I made a great camp and fortified it with palisades and mounds of earth, causing my people to build stone huts for shelter. And here we rested for four moons, hunting among the mountains and fishing in the waters of the gulf, laying in a great store of food.

While my people hunted and fished and took the rest they so much needed, I scouted the country to the south; for I had it in mind to strike one last great blow at my foes and then cross the gulf into the mountains of the Land of Nebu, there to sojourn and repose my people until the youth of the Tawney Haired came of age to take shield and spear and join the ranks of the warriors. For I was old now and foresaw the day coming when Spar-Goran alone would lead the warriors to battle. But I wished not to die of slow decay like an old pine of the mountains, useless and tottering, but to go down amid the tempest of war with the battle shout ringing in my ears. Therefore, though our ranks had been thinned by constant fighting, I meant yet once again to strike terror to my foes and hear once again the victorious shouts of my

warriors.

A DAY'S march to the southward of our camp there was a great mountain ridge, rising on our side, to the northward, in a steep slope from the valley below, but to the southward it looked down upon the plain almost as sheer as a city wall. Through this ridge there was but one pass, which was high and difficult; while the only other way to reach the northern side of the ridge was by making a three-day march to the westward, where the ridge ended and the valley that lay to the north of it fell away to the open plain. To eastward of the southern plain which the ridge overlooked lay the mountains of Spar-helan. South of the southern plain lay a spur of the mountains that bounded Aztalantepec upon the north. With a small, picked band I crossed those mountains and scouted Aztalantepec, undiscovered and unsuspected, taking prisoners some half-score Aztalan warriors who were not missed.

From these warriors I learned that the host of the allied peoples still held together, but that there was bewilderment and division amongst them; for though their rage still burned fierce and high against the Tawney Haired, they knew not where we had gone. And the Yellow Men, who had returned across the sea from their harried homeland in the Islands of the West, were minded to settle on the mainland, which suited the Aztalans and the Red Men not at all. The Cui-Chakquis were eager to return to their homeland; and the Aztalans had already set about the restoration of their ruined cities, believing that the scourge of the Tawney Haired had passed from among them forever. Some there were—particularly the Yellow Men—who believed that we had fled to the northward, over the Western Ocean, after the harrying of the Islands

of the West; others there were who thought we had returned to the mountains of the Land of Nebu, from whence we had come long years before; and there were others still—and they the most hopeful—who thought that our fleet might have been destroyed in a storm on the ocean and thus we had perished.

But Astura, inveterate in her hate, warned them that I, Daarmajd, yet lived and that ere long the Tawney Haired would strike again. Therefore she brought all the persuasion of her eloquence, all her wisdom in council, to the task of holding the host of the allied peoples together; telling them that should the onset of the Tawney Haired find them scattered they would never be able to rally again, and fall under our dominion forever.

Great was the dismay of the warriors whom I took prisoners when they found that Astura's words had been truly spoken and that the threat of the Tawney Haired still hovered above their land like a storm cloud. When I had learned all that they could tell me, I returned to the camp by the shore of the great gulf, taking them with me.

There I gathered the host for battle and marched southward, leaving the youths, and the oldest warriors, and a part of the women, in the camp to defend it should need be. The rest of the women I took with me, for our women of the Tawney Haired were strong and brave, valiant as men in battle. Swiftly I marched into the south; and when I had reached the mountains overlooking the plain of Aztalantepec I permitted no campfires to be lighted. Fiercely burned my heart with hatred of the foe as I looked down upon that land, for I held them as a lesser breed, formidable only on account of their numbers; and fiercely burned my heart with hatred of Astura,

for she was my foe of foes, the lifelong enemy, whose inveterate hate and indomitable spirit had marshalled the countless swarms of these lesser breeds against me.

Now the host of the allied peoples lay encamped about the fire-blackened ruins of Iztahuacan, whereas it was my desire that the battle should take place at the foot of the mountains, to the end that my retreat to the northward should not be cut off. I divided the host of the Tawney Haired, therefore, leaving much the larger portion where they lay encamped upon the mountain side facing the south; with the smaller portion I marched eastward along the summits of the mountains to a pass from whence I descended to the plain. Swiftly I marched across the plain, for it was my design to strike a sudden blow and then retreat rapidly to the pass from which I had descended, to the end that the host of the allied peoples should pursue me and be drawn away from their camp in the heart of the country to the foot of the mountains.

IN THIS design fortune favored me beyond my hope and I gave thanks to All-Father god. For despite all my precautions, a rumor had come to the ears of Astura of the Tawney Haired menace hovering near; and she had led a war band of Aztalans and Yellow Men toward the mountains to discover that the rumor might portend. This war band I encountered two days' march to the south, and attacking it by surprise almost annihilated it; and—crowning triumph of my days—Astura herself was taken as she attempted to escape in her litter, surrounded by her bodyguards. They were valiant men, those bodyguards, the remnant of Astura's Atlantean warriors; and where they stood, in the close ranked ring they formed about their chieftainess, there

they fell, fighting grimly.

At the last Astura leaped from her litter and baring her breast bade one of the last of her warriors kill her rather than that she should fall alive into my hands; but I struck the warrior down who would have obeyed her and seized her with a grip in which she was as powerless as a hare in the talons of an eagle. But she possessed a warrior's soul, if not a warrior's strength; and though she uttered not one word after she was taken, her fierce black eyes burned into mine with deathless hate and magnificent defiance. And when I saw that she would not break her silence I had her bound and replaced in her litter and bore her with me as I retreated northward.

Some other prisoners I had caused to be taken; and when these had seen the weakness of the force I had with me they were permitted to escape; for it was my hope that they would report my weakness to the chieftains of the allied peoples and that these would hurry northward to try and overwhelm me before I could make good my escape. And according to my hope, so it happened; for swiftly on my trace came the host of the allied peoples swarming to the foot of the mountains; and when they discovered me standing at bay in the pass from which I had descended, they thought that their hour of triumph had come at last and prepared to attack. But I had sent swift runners to Spar-Goran to bid him, when the battle should rage in the pass, to descend from the mountains and attack the allied host from the side and in the rear.

Astura I placed under guard upon a high rock from whence she could see the camps of the allied peoples upon the plain and witness the coming battle, for I was minded she should witness their overthrow.

Valiantly they came swarming up

the pass at the morrow's dawn; and valiantly we met them with spear and bow, with axe and sword; and we heaped the pass with their slain until they wavered and gave back. Then in the moment of their wavering came Spar-Goran's onset. When I saw him rushing across the plain at the head of the rest of the Tawney Haired warriors, I shook the sword of Astur at Astura where she sat guarded upon the high rock, and shouting to my warriors to come on led them also to the onset.

Bitter was that hour for Astura, as I intended that it should be; for she beheld the overthrow of her allies and the plain below the pass heaped with their slain.

That night when the battle was over and the full moon rode high above the mountains, I had her brought to my campfire. Beautiful she was as a hen falcon, though now she was old even as was I. I showed her the sword of Astur, still red with the blood of her allies; and I laughed at her, boasting, and asked her how she liked this day of reckoning between us.

Then she broke her silence and her fury was terrible. Curses she poured out upon me and upon the Tawney Haired, and taunts that were more infuriating than curses. Laughing like a mad woman she told me that despite our headlong valor and our skill in war I and my people were but barbarians, savages, unfit to hew wood and draw water for Yellow Men and Brown Men, much less for an Atlantean, such as she; and she taunted me that despite all our valor we had been driven forth from the fair land of Aztalantepec, back to the mountain dens where we belonged, and that it was she, Astura, who had been our bane.

Hard gripped I the hilt of the sword of Astur and would have slain her but that I scorned to slay a creature so

helpless. And I told her that had she been such as one of our valiant women I would have placed a sword in her hand and let her die fighting; but that I scorned her hate and her boasted power to instil it into the hearts of others, her persuasive eloquence and her wisdom in council. Then I called a guard of warriors and bade them take her down into the plain and set her free.

Thus I met my foe of foes and thus I parted with her, to meet no more in life. She spoke no word as the warriors led her forth to set her free. I think she would rather I had slain her than thus to scorn her and hold her power so lightly. I was to see her once more from a distance and that in a day of battle, but it was not fated for her that she should behold the death of the man she so hated.

The next morning at dawn we retreated northward to our camp by the shore of the gulf.

CHAPTER XII

How Daarmajd Fought His Last Fight

DURING the last week in January I learned through the newspapers that the Scrymgeours would sail on the third of February. Also, from the same source, that Dona Inez Santa Ana and her kinswoman, Dona Maria de Ovan-do, would sail on the same boat. No word or sign had come from Elaine. I shrugged my shoulders as I read and wondered how Varjeon would take it.

He took it in silence, as usual, but I knew he must have been feeling pretty bitter. Finally, on a Saturday, he said:

"How about taking the old tub for a run on the lake tomorrow?"

The proposition was really fool-hardy, for though the weather was mild and the channel from the Jackson Park basin open, there was enough thick ice

floating in the lake offshore to make navigation exceedingly dangerous. But Varjeon was in a mood for dangerous adventure and I, being an old fool and therefore the worst kind, took him up and we went—and nearly got drowned. We would have had it not been for Varjeon's great strength and skill in handling the boat. I remembered, too late, that it was the fourth of February and Elaine had sailed the day before.

Well, that happened which might have been expected. The boat got jammed in the ice and we escaped sinking by an eyelash, as it were. When we got back to my rooms that evening we were soaked to the skin and I was pretty nearly exhausted. After a little something hot, however, I felt better, and having loaned Varjeon a dressing gown while his clothes were drying, set about getting supper.

After supper, as usual, we smoked. And as I judged that Varjeon might not be in any mood for post mortems, I forebore any reference to our adventure. In fact, his usually placid temper was as near to being savage as I had ever known it.

I tamped the tobacco in my pipe, therefore, and smoked in discreet silence. I was brought out of a near doze by the sound of his voice. Daarmajd was speaking.

* * *

I WAS foolish, perhaps, not to slay Astura when I had her in my power. If I had been the Daarmajd of the old days in Dalrada, a mere savage ruthless warrior, it is probable that I would have done so. But I had not. Instead I had set her free. You would probably have attributed my motive for the act to magnanimity, what you call chivalry. But it was not so. No. It was because Khota-Laj had taught me sub-

tlety. It was because I knew that to Astura's prideful soul death would have been welcome; and that in setting her free, scorning what she might be able to do against me and my people, I humiliated her far beyond the power of death to daunt her. So I knew it would have been with me; and she possessed a warrior's soul and I judged her by myself. Well I knew that she would know no rest or peace of mind until my death or her own had wiped out the memory of the insult I had put upon her.

Even so it was. Ere long my scouts brought me word that she was going to and fro among the allied peoples, pleading, exhorting, persuading as she had never done before; convincing them that in the extermination of the Tawney Haired alone lay safety for themselves; making even of their defeats an argument for their valor, pointing out how the ranks of the Tawney Haired had been thinned by battle, worn out by victory, and that when our warriors fell, only striplings were left to take their places; whereas they, the allied peoples, could send two warriors to the battle for every one who fell. I knew that this was true and that it was now the youth of the Tawney Haired who were perishing ere they had produced children to take their places. Therefore I brooded in the night time, pondering a plan for the salvation of my people.

With Spar-Goran I held nightly communion beside the campfire, imparting to him wise counsel for the days to come; and he gave heed to my counsel, for he esteemed me wise as well as valiant above all other men; and he loved me, even as I loved him, with a love that was past all telling.

As I gazed upon him in the light of the campfire my old eyes were veiled with an unwonted dimness and my

heart beat high with pride, for I knew I had sired a man. He bore the features of Khota-Laj; tall and straight he was as a young pine of the mountains; and in his sinews was the terrific strength that had given me the emphatic name of Daarmajd, "The Strong." Valiant had he ever been, bravest of the brave ere yet he had reached the prime of young manhood. Khota-Laj's son and mine could have been no other wise. And he was wise as well as brave, wary and cunning in war, deep and farseeing in council.

He had mated with a girl as fair, almost, as Khota-Laj, and he knew no other woman. Deep-bosomed she was, and tall and strong and dauntless. Their younglings played about my knees by day and heeded not my grimness. Already their firstborn could lift the white axe and the sword of Astur, and boasted mightily thereof. Whereupon I would lay my great war shield upon his shoulders and bid him shout his war cry, which he would do lustily in a high shrill treble, although staggering under the weight of the great bronze war shield.

But the end came on apace, for my scouts brought me word that Astura had succeeded in gathering a host the like of which for numbers had not been seen in the world before. The Aztalans had mustered every man, up from the south had come a vast host of Cui-Chakquis, over the Western Sea the Yellow Men had come in countless numbers and down from the mountains of Spar-helan the Red Men, once our allies, had come to join the host of our foes. Already the scouts of the Red Men were spying out the position of our camp and numbers of them were taken and slain.

When I knew that the great host was advancing across the plain to the south,

I called together the assembly of all the Tawney Haired, both men and women. Standing upon a high mound in the center of the camp I told them of the storm of war that was coming and that we might meet and weather it, but that in so doing we would be likely to lose so many warriors that the remnant would be an easy prey for our foes. If there was no other way, I told them, then would we die fighting as became the Tawney Haired people; but I pointed out that the gulf beside which we were camped afforded a road by which they could retreat to the northern fastnesses of the Land of Nebu and there dwell until their seed should have multiplied and the youth had grown to manhood to take the places of the warriors who had fallen.

Valor without wisdom and prudence was mere folly, I told them, and I bade them, therefore, to heed my counsel, fire their camp and leave to the foe only a dear-bought and empty triumph. But as for me, I said that I had a mind to die fighting. The more so, as I left behind me a leader valiant in war and wise in council, who would lead the host of the Tawney Haired to new triumphs in the days to come.

Then I bade stand forth the old and veteran warriors, companions of my youth, survivors of the old days in Dalrada; and I demanded of them if they were willing to come and die with me, holding back the host of the foe until our people should be far away. With a shout they answered me, a shout that rolled in thunder through the mountains, even as far as to the pass leading down to the southern plain.

I unbelted the sword of Astur from about my waist and belted it upon Spar-Goran. Then we struck hands and looked into each other's eyes and said farewell without speaking.

AND as night came down upon the mountains we marched away to take our stand in the southern pass; and I Daarmajd, "The Strong," the mighty, the dauntless, led the way with the white axe in my hand. Beside me went Lian-Ru, "The Red Shield," trusty comrade, veteran of an hundred fights, leader of war bands since the days of Dalrada and the overthrow of Ruom the Goddess-born. The rays of the setting sun shone upon axe and spear, upon bronze shield and wolf head helmet as we disappeared in the shadows of the forest. Like a pack of grim old war wolves were we, brought to bay by Time the grim hunter, and meaning to redden our fangs with the blood of our foes ere we died. Through that night there seemed to march with me an unseen presence, an unseen arm about my shoulder—Khota-Laj, my long dead wife. I was going to my death as she would have had me go, for my people, dauntless to the end.

Five days and five nights we held the pass against the foe and made in front of our serried ranks a rampart of their slain; until, upon the morning of the sixth day, they came upon us from the rear, having marched around the end of the mountain ridge and come up the valley to the north. Even then we formed a circle, shield to shield, with spears advanced and axes swinging. And by my side I seemed to feel the Spirit of Khota-Laj cheering me on.

Grimly we fought as the foe rushed in upon us from all sides. Edge of axe and point of spear drank deep of red death in the morning sunshine and we made around that deadly circle a goodly company of slain to be our escort to

the world of shadows. Once, twice and again we flung them back from our ring of death; and each time they poured upon our ranks a shower of arrows from every side ere they closed in again. It was after the third time that we had sent them reeling back, daunted, that I saw Astura. Borne upon her litter, she was screaming curses at the allied warriors, bidding them close in and hew down the handful of grim heroes who still wielded axe and spear, standing in puddles of their own blood. And then, an arrow that had overshot our ranks struck her full in the breast, and with one shrill scream her implacable spirit departed to the world of shadows—to herald the coming of Daarmajd "The Strong."

* * *

VARJEON, or Daarmajd rather, ceased speaking and glancing up I saw that Varjeon slept—slept in very truth and not in any trancelike twilight of the mind. The strange phenomenon had never ended thus before and alarm gripped my heart with icy fingers. But a moment's examination assured me that his pulse was normal, his breathing easy and natural; and so I let him sleep. I left him sleeping on my studio couch when I went to morning lecture. Returning by his rooms in 57th Street, I found there a letter which I gave to him. After Varjeon had opened and read it his spirits rose remarkably and he was again the old laconic Varjeon of few words and rich silences. He handed me the letter in silence. I took it and read it in the same silence. It said:

"Forgive me. I love you."

It was signed: "Elaine."

"M'BONG-AH"—What does it mean? A strange word, indeed, but it is the title of an even stranger story! Read Rog Phillips' masterpiece in the next issue!



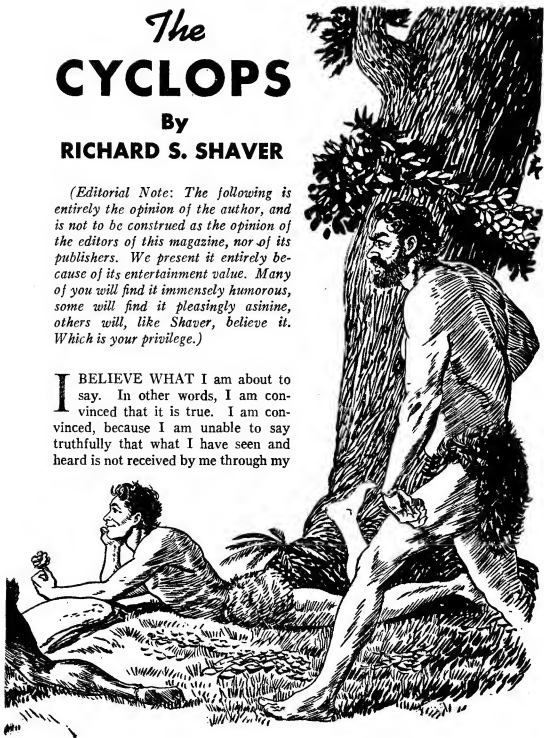
Who were the Cyclops? This is an article, not really a story, but it is written in story form. Did lovely, giant Cyclop women visit the Earth ages ago to bring lonely men the beauty of gods?

The CYCLOPS

By
RICHARD S. SHAVER

(Editorial Note: The following is entirely the opinion of the author, and is not to be construed as the opinion of the editors of this magazine, nor of its publishers. We present it entirely because of its entertainment value. Many of you will find it immensely humorous, some will find it pleasingly asinine, others will, like Shaver, believe it. Which is your privilege.)

I BELIEVE WHAT I am about to say. In other words, I am convinced that it is true. I am convinced, because I am unable to say truthfully that what I have seen and heard is not received by me through my



The Belle of the Cyclops came to Earth to be courted by the mighty Brown Men, and to be admired through the walls of her transparent tepees

eyes and ears. Nothing I have ever seen or heard is *more* real, nor is there any way for me to differentiate between the real and the unreal (if unreal it is). If you were in my place, you could make no such differentiation, and therefore, you would be forced to admit that *all* that you saw or heard was unreal, or *none* of it. Fortunately, you are not in that position—so you can read what I have to say here, and if you disbelieve, you can shrug it off, with no lack of complaisance.

"Cyclopean" is not a mere word. The Cyclopean *was* man! Not a human being, but the original true man. Knowing of the Cyclopean race, true forebears of man, one cannot but laugh at the Neanderthal, Cro-Magnon, Missing Link hokey foisted upon us as a picture of early man.

He was the Titan who rode the starways (and still does—far, far onward in the space flows), seeking always the best pastures of space for his flock. He was once on Earth, both before it had a sun, and after it acquired a sun, after the first primeval forests sent Ygdrasils towering skyward beyond our imagination, beyond the Redwoods. He was the Immortal of our legends, the God-race who preceded man even in our Bible.

You want to see his former home on earth? Very well, come along.

* * *

We enter a department store. It is big and it is busy: trucks rumble in and out of the basement, people bustle through all the many floors.

We take an elevator to the basement, to the sub-basement. We get out there and wait till the lights along the farther bank of service elevators flash, and we saunter over. We make the sign, and the little brown-faced guard pushes an unseen buzzer. A light flashes, minutes pass, the door of one shaft pops open,

and a smart young girl in uniform calls: "Down, Down!"

How can that be? We are already in the basement! She is calling down! Then we are enlightened.

"Down! Deep Utilities! Down!"

We walk in the open door. It slams shut after us, and we start down. Down! Down, and down! Faster and faster! Will it never stop?

The girl smiles at my sick face, saying:

"It isn't so bad when you get used to it. This is your first time, I guess? I kinda like it now I'm used to it."

I only smile. I haven't a word to say. All I can think of is that these are the *deepest* utilities I ever heard of.

Then miraculously, lights begin to flash by the rushing car. We are passing lighted floors again.

"The bottom is reached. Kindly step off now."

* * *

I HAD better tell you something about the place you are getting into.

The Cyclops were not giants with one eye. The one-eyed part sprang from finding skulls of great size with one big hole in front . . . or so the "authorities" say.

But the authorities are notoriously apt to invent a lot of explanations for what they don't know.

Cyclops was a giant and he had two eyes, and he lived on earth long, long ago. Not so long as you think, but longer than any man like man today lived.

They derived their name from the great cycles of space movements, which determine the vortical currents of space energies, and by which they map their own movements so as to bring them always where the greatest amount of life-sustaining materials are concentrated by the currents of space. These are called the Tides of Tee, and they

are vast beyond thinking. So are the space ships of the Cyclopeans.

The ancient temples of Greece were built upon the tremendous ruins of the Temples of the Cyclops. But the Cyclops was even then just a myth to the people of Greece, as the tale of Ulysses and the Cyclops can tell you, if you read. Of course, you can believe that some branch of the Cyclops, ignorant, one-eyed and outcast of their fellows, still remained alive on earth at the time of Ulysses. I prefer to believe that Ulysses made up the whole yarn because the general knowledge of the existence of the giant Cyclopean race of the past was so well known to Greek people, because their own cities were built over the ruins of their ancient homes.

But the Cyclop made few surface buildings. The surface was not very hospitable on Earth when he was here—being frozen, to my way of thinking. I could be wrong about that, and he may have started to live here at the time when trees like Ygdrasil flourished everywhere.

Cyclops and Cycle and Cyclopean were related words . . . I pause to look up the word in a very old book I have called *Bibliotheca Classica* (J. Lempriere). I come to the word Cyclops, and I quote:

"The tradition of their having one eye originates from their custom of wearing small bucklers of steel, which covered their faces, and had a small aperture in the middle, which corresponded exactly to the eye. They have been supposed to be the workmen of Vulcan, and to have fabricated the thunderbolts of Jove. The most solid and impregnable walls of fortresses were said, among the ancients, to be the work of Cyclops, and we find that Jupiter was armed with what they had fabricated. The shield of Pluto, and

the trident of Neptune, were the produce of their labor. The Cyclops were reckoned among the Gods. Apollo destroyed them all, because they had made the thunderbolts of Jupiter with which his son Aesculapius was killed . . ."

So the old accounts are not so inaccurate, when you know enough of the truth to fill in the missing parts.

The Cyclopeans did build tremendously on early Earth, and they did manufacture the weapons and miraculous armor of the Gods of Mythology. That much is true, just as my old book tells me.

It also tells me that Cybele was the Phrygian word for caves. That the Cyclops were confined to the center of the earth by Kronos (first God) and later set free during the war between the Titans and the Gods.

The Encyclopedia tells me they built the walls of Mycenae, too. So much for the accepted authorities, who are of little help when one has to learn of things they did not know.

THERE is no truer saying than the remark that "an expert is an ordinary man away from home."

There is little a man can learn from human books or writings to help him understand the incontrovertible evidence before his eyes when he enters the "Deep Utilities" realm of secrecy among modern humans.

Down here are people, but they are not a part of the awful architecture and machine art about them. That is alien, Titanic, and black with age—in some places. In other places the caverns are new and bright as if just constructed, because those parts were sealed off hermetically from the process of atmospheric decay. In still other parts the evidences of ancient latter-day life are tremendous, Mayan-type carvings

scatter over the ancient original work. Incan type paintings, Indian sacrificial altars still showing the blood stains of savage rites . . . (our kind of latter-day) man has lived down here, and been forgotten again.

But the original builders, they were not man! *They were Cyclopeans*, the race that traverses space following the great cycle of the Tides of Tee. They were perhaps the first life upon earth, and in some ways they were the last. For, comparatively, we are not alive! Knowing all, one realizes that present day man is *only a ghost*, a faint reflection out of the past that still echoes faintly with the remnants of a mighty grace and beauty and wisdom the ways of the past. Remnants, did I say? I mean ghostly echoes only, in the sweet pure laugh of children one can sometimes hear it, in the eyes of a wise child, in the writings of a Christ, in such words as "gentleman." Only in such things does the wisdom of the Cyclopeans echo down to us of the surface.

But here in the secret caverns, their original homes, the vast might of their being echoes titanically with every reverberating footstep upon the polished floor. That mirror polish is the perfect finish and the perfect reflector of both light and sound.

Why did they bother, one wonders. And then one sees. A faint crack runs up one side of the vast bright wall—and one realizes that the mirror polish was their method of showing off by continuous revealing reflection the slightest shift of Earth's rocks about them. No slightest crack could remain unseen upon those walls, and the Cyclopeans immediately sealed off such cracked portions of their underworld cities forever from occupancy.

It is in the storehouses of their "utilities" that one sees the real history and nature of the Cyclopean race.

For instance one wonders what the transparent teepees were used for? Stacked away in packages are sectional plastic tents, which can be erected into rigid teepee-like dwellings. But they are transparent!

After a moment's thought, one knows that a people possessing the telaug—which reveals the inmost secrets of the mind to anyone—would not have our foolish modern attitude toward nudity. Instead they would revel in the beauty of the figure—and their teepees would be transparent to keep from concealing any precious bit of beauty from admiring eyes.

And their teepees, used only in excursions to the surface world, were transparent. But you have not yet been introduced to the telaug, you say. You don't know what I mean?

Well, every Cyclopean male and female possessed a telaug, or several, and they were not only penetrative rays, revealing all the interior of the body to any gaze, they were as well augmentors of the thought of each to the other, and were in use constantly as their means of communication—to such an extent that spoken language was a curiosity of their savants, a plaything of poets, a relic of their past. True language was telepathed, recorded.

THE belle of the Cyclops was a space traveler. With her she carried an immense amount of equipment, a collection of portable machines from many various worlds of space, and her "travel office" gave her full reports of what to expect on alien planets down to details of how to dress to appear at home among the natives.

Her wardrobe, when she came to Earth, included the sarong and full details on how to sing the love songs of the Earth people, as well as how to use her glassine teepee just as Earth dwell-

ers did. For some of the Cyclops of Earth were not transient. They remained here, awaiting the final word of the government on the day to take off into space on the next leg of their journey in pursuit of the cycles of the life-force through space.

The belle of the Cyclops carried a "Venutian tooled jeday" at her waist thong. She wore no clothes, for nudity was a matter of pride; they knew that only de-infected races found the body foul and to-be-concealed. A Venusian (their spelling is Venutian) jeday was a thriller ray which she used to the end of courtship, of flirtation, directing its terrifically stimulating ray upon the male of her fancy (a jeday could be a weapon when so adjusted).

The male of her choice would accompany her to the "exhiliary," a chamber where they indulged in pleasure rays and visions and other forms of entertainment.

Today the exhiliatories are the exclusive property of a secret clique who keep all the knowledge of the Elder races to themselves, as they have for centuries. They are not, this clique, entirely an Earth race, being composed of diverse group of people who follow the ancient trail through space in the wake of the long-passed Cyclopeans.

The belle of the Cyclops came here for fun, for a few weeks or months among the mighty virgin forests of Earth's primeval surface, to sing the "woo-songs" of the natives, to court and be courted by the mighty brown men of the Earth, to be admired through the transparent walls of her teepee—and to study what might be learned of serious things through the works of Earth's wise.

She was twenty to thirty feet in height, and there was not a sagging fiber in her perfect, vitally alive body. Love was a pursuit above all other pursuits,

an art and a science, a philosophy and an end in itself—but she also carried on her perfect shoulders a brain active and retentive beyond any now alive on Earth, beyond our understanding.

She could navigate a ship through space, travel at light speeds without fear—quite alone—and she could enrapture a mere man until his bones melted in a fury of desire.

She could drive a canoe along the rapids of Earth rivers with her strong arms, she could swim like a fish. She was life in a way we have forgotten life could be. An intense fire of vitality sent her searching through all space for the perfect mate and the perfect place for her home and her steading—for an age of living. Then on again, when all that time of breeding and loving and building was past, and the vast tides of space had changed the nature of nature around her into a less desirable life-way. On, on, ever on into the heart of space-tee, to safe-tee, to vitali-tee, toward greater growth, toward "heavy-enn."

She was a pioneer, and a Goddess eternal, both a girl and an old woman and an immortal. She was wisdom and adventure, and she was vastly more than today's human. She was called woman. To her, we are inhuman, a monstrous kind of life to be avoided—ungentle, unloving, and destructive of beauty and culture. We, if she met us today—would be called "errants." The things that plague us from the ancient caves of her former home on Earth—she would call "derrish."

And the word errant, means just that. An ant which has human form, tiny malevolent, and full of mental error—robotism to de—the err ant was a pitiful thing that happens to life that does not pursue the space currents which make vast areas of space habitable to immortals.



The horrid monster approached slowly, rage and hate on its bony face—closer to the sleeping man

INVASION of the BONE MEN

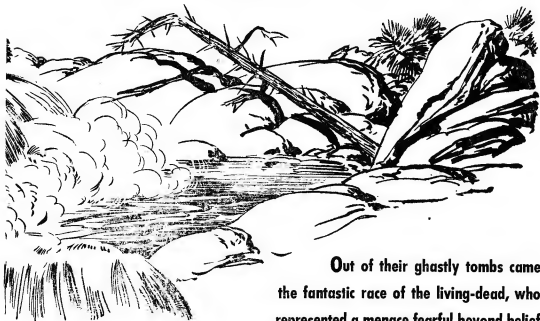
By JOHN STUART WALWORTH

IT WAS a late afternoon in August of the Year of the Feathers when I thrust my canoe into the swift current of the Teepee River, darting from the low, pebbly shore in a trice and whirling away downstream toward Fisherman Falls. These falls plunge with uproarious splendor into Broken Valley and rush jubilantly to the sea at Crazy Hat.

I had proceeded a short distance through smooth, fast water when a sudden disturbance in the flow ahead attracted my attention and I braked furiously with my paddle to study the thing close at hand. The bow swung smartly about and my craft straddled the current, throwing the stern forward and burying me in a shower of foam and spray which momentarily obscured my vision. I lost control of my progress

and was pitched ignominiously upon the beach while the canoe was swept riderless downstream, crashing into a ragged boulder where it splintered and sank from sight. The resonant thunder of the distant falls came audibly to my ears as I sat dejectedly among the pebbles pondering what I must do to extricate myself from this impossible position. Between me and the sea lay but one sensible route of travel and my only means of executing it now rested at the bottom of the river.

On both sides of the watercourse and extending for many miles rose the Thunder Mountains, a monstrous procession of granite peaks, massy and cold, and of sublime proportions. Here the mighty cataracts sang and the bristling pinnacles of Stentor Peak thrust themselves dizzily up into the



Out of their ghastly tombs came the fantastic race of the living-dead, who represented a menace fearful beyond belief

vaporous sky-trains which moved indolently about the hidden summit. There were no gently sloping foothills such as one may find in the Thief River Range, only rugged shoulders heavily timbered after the fashion of the Maiden's Breast away to the East. Game was abundant and of all kinds, some not to my advantage. At my back, then, the black forests and the high mountain passes remained as my alternative to following the river to the sea.

Having begun my journey in late afternoon, I soon found nightfall upon me and with the first cool and penetrating air of the northern twilight set about making myself comfortable. The sun had long since settled behind the Thunderers, whose ragged battlements stood up bold and black into the pale green sky. The harsh cacaphony of a late-homing kingfisher rattled through the dusk and the sibilant whispering of the river mocked me as it raced to the sea.

Pushing through the tangle of alder and bitterberry, I made my way over the rocky soil to high land above the river to escape the eternal mists that shroud its progress through the night. I fashioned a lean-to of small saplings with the opening away from the wind and built a fire. In the gloom of the forest even these rudimentary comforts were difficult to achieve. However, I finally succeeded in drying my clothing after much fussing and blowing at the reluctant embers, and banking the fire about with cobbles and moss, turned in and fell asleep.

It is hard to set, upon reflection, the exact hour of my awakening. The fire had gone out, and a faint scent of decadence hung in the air. I lay motionless, examining the small clearing which I had occupied. The moon was high and bright and its friendly light drifted among the great trees like vagrant dust from a jeweler's bench. Deep from

among the pillowed boughs came the haunting ululations of an owl. The strident croaking of the little green frogs had ceased and the deep-murmuring river glided softly along between its hushed and fragrant banks. I waited.

I BECAME aware of a plaintive clacking and puling which came to me from across the clearing. As my eyes grew accustomed to the half-light I perceived the outlines of Indian burial racks set on poles, and laden with blanketed corpses. As I surveyed them, one figure, to my horror, sat upright and thrust aside its wrappings. Another followed and dropped to the ground, and another, and then another, until the clearing teemed with the wraith-like creatures whining in low tones intermingled with the dry rustling of bones. Having been confined in their elegant ceremonial trappings, their spangles and bright beads faintly glimmered as they moved among the trees.

Now they were busy about a cluster of dirty paint pots, daubing their dead cheek bones vermilion and black. Yellow-eyed owls, restless and petulant, hopped about in the decussated cavities of their ribs, plucking at strips of dried flesh. Others flapped through the trees, or glided low over the corpse, the great eyes glowing like malevolent stars. The incipient squeaks and gibbering had risen by degrees to an infuriated hissing which rapidly became a voluble wail with strange, guttural undertones. Convulsed pipings of yellow mud appeared about the petrified thighs and legs, and painted black eyes stared dumbly from their hipbones. Red were the kneecaps and the tiny, chewed ends of the fir-twig brushes rasped and whistled as they sped back and forth. I withdrew further into my shelter, shaking and bathed in icy perspiration, abhorring the challenge

of this unnatural band. Abruptly they finished their crude immolations and moved off, a long line of bloodless images, disappearing into the vast, illimitable darkness of the surrounding forest.

By the Great Stone Faces! The Bonemen!

FERAL and untamed, these inhuman predators had for centuries held an inexorable command of these forests and mountains, marauding in the uplands, laying waste the settlements, having no government but violence, no insignie but fire, and leaving ruin everywhere in the wake of their stinking trespass. Recurrent parties of hunters who had set out to find them had met either with the savage opposition of the living tribes who feared and revered them, or had disappeared without trace. Lonely sentries, espying their grisly silhouettes surmounting some craggy battlement, or hearing their twittering and cackling as they passed camp fires in the night, have fled screaming from their posts, mad and unhinged, to wander broken and melancholy in the wilderness. Some say their renegade souls join the Bonemen.

In twos and threes they appear at solitary trading posts in the quiet seasons, murdering the lonely factors who man them. Setting fire to the establishments, they dance away into the smoke like fantastic sticks. Of the fate of these unfortunate tradesmen, dead, or despairing of their reason, fearful rumors pass among the posts, yet none knew. Their bodies became as mould in the forest and with the passing of time they faded from human memory, legends only. And so the inhabitants lay to the Bonemen all manner of misfortune, droughts, lean winters, the hunter's false aim, birth-strangled babes, and the cracking of the mountains that slide from their lofty beds and engulf the

cowering settlements below them.

The clearing was still again, disturbed occasionally by the softly-heaving boughs, the soft-knocking cones. The pungent aroma of the conifers lay heavy on the night and I was surprised at my perception of these things. Perhaps they enabled me to gather my wits, for I decided, suddenly, to place as much distance between myself and this wild mortuary as I could, and fast.

Boldly I crawled from the lean-to, rose to my feet and froze, the moon bright on my beaded face. Across the clearing the dank and obscure thickets had parted and a macilent hobgoblin of medium span stalked to the cluster of paint pots and began to search the ground among them with its piercing eyes. With a quick movement, incredible in a thing of such dried, calceous construction, it stooped and plucked a massive, metallic article from the debris. Erect again, its baleful glare swept the clearing and came to rest full upon my stupid countenance, mouth agape. I was transfixed.

Gibbering, it came at me with long bounds of its spindly legs, reeking of filth, and swinging a rough-hewn bludgeon as long as my body. Landing before me the creature paused, the cage of its ribs swelling and subsiding like a bellows, the imprisoned owl chuckling and mewing my indictment. Like a pendulum the club came hard at my head. With a scream I struck out blindly, the congealed blood tumbling through my veins like turbulent cakes of loosened ice. The thing staggered and collapsed at my feet, a shattered house of dried sticks. Who can conceive my violence! Wildly I trampled upon the structure, strewing the bones in every direction until I had destroyed all vestige of its being. The bewildered and maledictory owl soared to an extraordinary height above the ground

before it regained its composure and with some display of dignity glided wearily into the trees. I believe I slept, throwing myself upon the ground, for I was next aware of the rosy pinnacles of the Thunderers standing flushed and bright above the forest.

THE burial racks were empty. I looked about for my grim assailant and found his several parts scattered indiscriminately before the lean-to. Clutched in a stiff, detached hand was the object of his night's search, a rusty, corroded medallion inscribed with a curious black and crooked cross surmounted by a rampant bird of prey. I dropped it into my pouch, for who would believe me when I told of this encounter? Reprieved somewhat of my fear of these creatures, and knowing them to be destructible, I set out to determine the object of their next offense and to warn, if I could, their victims.

Following a clearly defined path which led into the forest, I pursued a course straight up the shoulders of the Thunderer's and bearing East after some hours of climbing, came out upon a scraggly ridge peppered with brilliant red flowers and swarming with picas that bleated and scampered into their holes at my approach. The gravelled cheek of the ridge shimmered in the sultry, midday heat and burned through the soles of my moccasins. I passed over it and descended the opposite side, dropping once more into the woods.

Hunger now assailed me, my stomach appealing for consideration of its vacuous estate. Risking discomfort, I stooped and drank from a crystal freshet which bubbled out of the snows high in the mountains, and continued through the forest, noting the course of my quarry from broken plumes and balls of feathers cast up by the vor-

cious owls. Here paint flecked the shrubs. There dried ligaments and broken ferns betrayed their disorderly passage.

Late in the afternoon I emerged from the forest onto a high meadow, a wild concourse of deep and luxuriant grasses, close by the watershed of the Yellow Dog River, and followed some old wagon ruts, dusty and worn, and apparently much used to the water's edge. At this point the river's bed contracted to a breadth of perhaps seventeen longbows, partly dammed by beavers, where had formed a sluggish and peccant backwater lined with a profusion of sedge and umbrageous willows. Blueberries grew hereabouts in abundance and I feasted on them, dangling my legs over the steep bank. Vast swarms of waterfowl arose, forming endless clouds of cuneiform shapes, passing back and forth over the meadow in dappled, undulating waves. Far down the valley smoke wafted up from some Indian supper fires and eddied in lazy, blue spirals among the cottonwoods.

I slid down the bank and made my way across the dam, disrobed, and plunged into the swift current that swept along the far shore. I drifted downstream until I observed a break, made by some furious passage, in the brow of the bank. The detritus was still damp with their passing and the scrub was littered with their refuse. Striking for shore again, I dressed and turned toward Man-with-Two-Heads Pass and Crazy Hat, now clearly the Bonemen's destination.

Long, umber shadows crept over the plain and slowly mounted the nutbrown walls of the canyon before me. The pale flame of the sun struck the deep green of the shaggy timberbelt, pinched and crumpled like some giant buffalo robe thrown carelessly to the floor, and glistened along the snow line. Run-

ning, now, to make use of the waning light, I plunged into the defile and raced for the heights that towered over the valley. Weariness numbed my legs and my head sat weightless upon my shoulders. Certainly this acrimonious band would not reach the settlement before dawn, and probably not until the following evening, yet I was to be hard put to outrace them with my warning.

AT MID-MORNING I rounded the point at Many Skulls and was hailed from the shore by a party of fishermen who gesticulated and clapped their hands at my gory appearance. My message sent them off across the bottomlands to gather in the settlers on the flats, their nets and poles suddenly forgot and unattended along the water's edge. I took a canoe downstream in the boiling, ocean-bound race of the Teepee, shouting a warning to occasional hunters and farmers whose startled answers were lost in the roar of the rapids. Entering a stretch of quiet water I paused to look back at the mountains and watched the endless stream of Bonemen appear, trot along a ridge, and begin their descent into the forest. Their stiff, jogging movements gave them the appearance of a thin, achromatic snake crawling through a bald spot in the high meadow grass.

Shortly I drew within sight of the fort. The gates of the palisades were flung open before I had beached my canoe and several figures emerged, running hard. Scrambling down the rocky shore, they splashed out into the stream, Daniel, Joshua, James, and my brother Seth among them. They grabbed my canoe and pulled it ashore.

"Well, what is it?" roared Seth. "We've been up all night."

"Bonemen!" I croaked. "They're

coming fast."

Daniel waved to someone on the palisade walls and in a moment the rumble of tom-toms, beating the assembly, resounded within the fort. Already people were coming out of the woods on the other side of the river and streaming over the meadow to cross the footbridge below the bluff. I went on to explain my misfortunes as we made for the gates.

"Two nights ago I lost my canoe in the Teepee when I got interested in something that was none of my business and flipped the canoe over." I pulled the medallion out of my pouch and tossed it to Daniel. "I slept in the Bonemen's front yard, Dan, in that old burial ground North of the Yellow Dog watershed. One of 'em came back to pick up that medallion and caught me watching 'im. We had a fight. I won."

Their combined expletives were a single, explosive "No!" They soberly eyed my battered face and what remained of my clothing.

"By the Great Stone Faces!" crowed the irrepressible James. "He ain't fit for sucker bait. Lookit the tub."

"Well, a pig's nipple to you, son. I ran almost all the way on a bellyful of cold water and blueberries."

"Jakey boy!" he snorted.

By the time we had reached the gates the square was milling with an excited throng of townspeople and outlanders, craning their necks as we trotted up the street. I heard my name called several times before we reached the assembly platform. Daniel leaped upon it and shouted.

"The Bonemen are coming! They're on the mountain and should be in the woods by sundown."

A perceptible wave of consternation swept over the common face of the crowd and many turned to stare at the South Range.

"Now hold on," he continued. "I have some encouraging words for you. Jacob, here, has found their hiding place and two nights ago destroyed one of the mutts with his fists." At this revelation there were roars of doubt and approbation and a spattering of hand clapping.

"Quiet, now, quiet." Daniel waved his arms. "Adam, you take ten men and drive the field cattle into the marshes across the river. And lose 'em good. Joshua, you post forty men on the sentry walks, now. Food will be brought up to you. Seth, take over the sentry box at the gates and pass the stragglers from the flats. Matthew! Where's Matthew?"

Someone shouted and pointed. Matthew had assembled a party of men and was running about the post closing the grainhouse ports, locking the tannery, and opening the public cellars. Others were trundling heavy carts and tumblers into the street intersections. A bevy of frightened but eager youngsters were chasing the oxen between the buildings and tethering them to stall rings set in the foundations. They yawed and snorted and pulled at their ropes. Kindly, Daniel looked down upon the faces about him.

"I want all the old men, women and children settled in the public cellars when the sun drops below the West sentry box. And keep those trap doors bolted! John, that'll be your job. Get your men!"

I CLIMBED to the sentryway, moving among the men and giving them a brief account of my fight. As I passed along the walls I filled my belly from the steaming pots which the women were lugging across the square until I reached my small quarters in the West blockhouse. Once inside I repaired

some of the damage done to my person in the last two days and rolled into my bunk. I awakened to a rough hand shaking my shoulder.

"C'mon, get up!"

I bounded out of bed with but one thought in my mind, arms flailing, to be slammed against the wall and told to stop acting like a ninny and get into my clothes. In the darkened room I could make out the looming figure of Daniel, the giant among us. He was holding me at arms' length like a puppy.

The sun was below the peak of the blockhouse roof as we descended the stairway to the ground level of the fort, and the men from the slaughterhouse were running along the walls handing meat cleavers and long skinning knives up to the sentries on the walks. Daniel pointed to a line of orderly mounds which protruded from the ground like the mossy backbone of some earth-bound monster. He flicked the dottle out of his pipe with a horny thumb and indicated the earthworks with a wave of his hand.

"We've got the old folks and the youngsters packed in those cellars, but I hope the dirty scarecrows don't get inside the fort. The doors haven't been changed for a good many years and some of them are rotten. Fine time to think about it, huh?"

I didn't answer, although I agreed with him, and we continued to walk about the enclosure, making ourselves generally officious as we examined the crude defenses. We were armed with cleavers and knives, hayforks, clubs, anvils, boulders and a number of additional bone breaking instruments, many of them devised on the moment by the alert fellows on the walls. All street intersections were blocked with carts loaded with every manner of debris to make them immovable. This device acted as a barricade for each street,

providing a series of cumbersome obstacles for anyone who, unaware of their presence, tried to pass hurriedly from one point in the fort to another. They had worked well in the days of my grandfather when the Yellow Dogs came down from the mountains on their sporadic raids, so we would try them once more. Close by, in the growing shadow of the tannery, stood a brace of catapults.

We climbed to the sentry walk. The trees along the river stood out dimly, dark patches of fir framing the lighter color of the willows. Mist was rising from the water and hung like a ghostly mantle above the whispering reeds. Many eyes peered intently at the dark forests. No light was showing within the fort and occasionally one could hear the mice rustling in the blockhouse hay. A cowbell tinkled in the marshes. The moon, an ochreous ball of light, moved from behind the ramparts of the mountain. James, perched astride the peaked roof of the Northeast blockhouse, suddenly raised his arm, slid down the roof and dropped lightly to the walk.

THEY came out of the woods at a shambling trot straight for the gates, uttering their whimpering insect cries. As they swept across the meadow the rising moon contributed a slight phosphorescence to their frames and their weird, hobgoblin shadows . . . ridiculous, hopping shapes . . . stretched out to us in long, dancing waves. Suddenly their long piney torches, resinous and quick and held high above their marbled heads, flickered and came to life, an articulated fuse which started on one flank of the mob and spread rapidly to the other, spitting and crackling as the fat wood burst into flames. The subdued mewing gave way to that uncanny, singing wail which I had ob-

served two nights before and I felt the shudder that passed through the fort. The palisade walls shone bloodily in the wavering light and we shrank in the darkness behind them.

These preposterous, unsexed monsters recognized the fear which assailed their victims and so struck like a leaderless rabble, leaves before the wind. Now the galloping host broke into bodies, a small diversionary group heading for the gates, the others sweeping to either side to encircle the fort. The gates were thrown wide and the twittering horde streamed past the sentry boxes, a rolling mass of abominable defoedation. The waiting hunters and tradesmen fell upon them with wild and passionate yells, rushing the teeming ranks with long timbers. Milling among their crumbled fellows, the disorganized remnants turned to flee through the gates to find them shut tight. They fell to fighting among themselves, pressed against the walls where the frenzied townsmen battered them into the dust.

The Bonemen on the meadow who chose to scale the palisade walls flung their torches into the grannery and public houses, setting them afire and darting into the billowing smoke. The men who dispersed the Bonemen at the gates now swarmed onto the sentry walks and joined in the melee, smashing at the skulls and hands which essayed a hold on the railings. The cleavers and skinning knives gleamed dully in the inchoate fires as they rose and fell. The hayforks were wielded with a fury and spirit never observed in the fields. The Bonemen were harvested in droves and pitched into the air to fall and break up on the ground. Now and then a weapon was wrested from its owner and put to more frightful employment, fixing him to the walls like a wriggling insect pinned to a board.

Still the calceous wave poured over

the palisades, the red glitter of their eyes demeaning the glow of the fires. Flaming arrows, swift-flying pinpoints of light, showered down indiscriminately, imbedding themselves in wood and bone. Saul dropped from the wall, a burning faggot, rolled up against a corn crib and sputtered out his life there. Shouts and commands and cries for help came spasmodically through the general noise, rising and falling like a pounding surf. Daniel could be heard bawling like a steer as he ran from one point to another. James, the smithy, who can lift a palisade post from its deep nest in the ground, burst out of the smoke the fire glistening on the sweat of his corded muscles. He swung a wagon tongue like a barrel stave, driving it into a wedge of Bonemen. It sounded like a small boy running a stick along some fence.

With a crackling boom the grease and tar barrels in the wagon factory tore the structure apart. On the one hand the blast hurled the Southwest blockhouse into the river, searing the grass to the water's edge. On the other it leveled the blazing tannery, sweeping upon the adjacent slaughterhouse with its imprisoned cattle, roasting them in their stalls. Their bawling and frantic stomping ceased abruptly as the walls folded leisurely inward and crashed down upon them. Dim figures picked themselves up for some distance around.

Many lay still in crumpled heaps where they had fallen. The air was charged with flying embers that plummeted out of the smoke onto the roof tops. Here a house caught fire, stood out in sudden darkness, and then collapsed with a loud report. The belching overcast seethed and rolled, coiling upon itself oily, black and yellow, following the irresponsible whim of the night winds, lifting to reveal dark forms flitting against the firelight and then

settling again, inexorably shutting out all inspection. Struggling groups fell apart from the howling mass, surging back and forth across the square, the roars of the living smothering the mewling of the dead.

Joshua was struck full in the face and sat down heavily and stupidly on the ground, his head rolling grotesquely on his breast while two Bonemen held his arms out to his sides. A third approached and shivered his skull, dispersing the bloody fluid over the ground, and he rolled over onto his back. Then they moved off.

THE West wall was breached and split, the men on the walks flung headlong to the ground as it crashed. Someone loosed the terrified bullocks as the Bonemen poured through the gap, pelting them in the rumps with stones. They stampeded into the giggling swarm trampling them under, or tossing them high in the air with their wide horns, leaving the stragglers to the shouting men hard on their tails.

A labored and ponderous creaking near at hand told that our catapults were being wheeled into place. These were massive structures made of thick, squared timbers. Central pillars of rugged, unpolished oak supported a lattice work of slender cross beams to which were lashed large, copper kettles filled with burning pitch. These pillars were made of trimmed planks, thick at the base and tapered at the top, giving the catapult tremendous mobility. The long arms were pulled back and down by an arrangement of cranks and leather straps and then released whereupon they whipped through the air and discharged their deadly load into the struggling mass of Bonemen in the field. Frequently the kettles tore loose from their bonds to whistle out over the fields and crash into the river and

woods beyond, ringing like bells as they bounded among the rocks in the rapids and caromed off through the trees. And so the night was made mad with another instrument which sometimes went afoul and jumped into the air, flinging its load into the backs of our people on the walls. Thus did Luke die, impaled high on a palisade timber and hanging head down, the flames from his burning hair creeping up his back and burning him as on a spit.

The guards about the earth mounds succeeded in repelling one assault after another. However, an isolated mound near the crackling ruins of the slaughterhouse was covered with the inert bodies of its defenders who sprawled flat on their backs, crushed and headless, their prize no longer inviolate. And so a cellar door was riven and the whining wraiths were dropping into the dark entryway. A boiling column of fire welled up and then subsided to crackle along the timbered doorway.

This incandescent hell disgorged a terrified and motley array of old men, women and children and dogs, who scampered madly in all directions. They were quickly overtaken by the ecstatic Bonemen, convulsed with the display of easy and defenseless prey, who reached out for them with their long clubs and knocked them to the ground.

They tore at the women's clothing and leaped about like rutting stags, waving diversified fragments of under-clothing and bunches of long hair. An old man's head was wrenched from its scrawny post and rolled along the ground to be kicked back and forth until it sailed from sight through the breach in the wall. The crazed dogs, moaning and running in circles, yelped and snarled at one another as they contested for the multitudinous bones which were lying everywhere.

Luke's infant son, dragging a

scorched plaything through the rubble and burning wood, broke under the vollied blows, his fledgling bones poking from the crimson marl like weathered twigs. His mother, half-naked and clumsy in the confining tatters of her leather skirts, drove into the Bonemen with a milking stool and was struck from behind, cloven to her breasts. Her backbone was ripped from its flesh, her despairing screams choked off as the whirling mass collapsed in the dust.

EVERY semblance of leadership had disappeared with the explosion of the tannery. Survival had become a matter of chance and personal fortune and, excepting the men who guarded the cellar doors, the townspeople ran from one sore point to another wherever the fighting seemed to be thickest. Individuals and small parties loomed out of the smoke, pursued and pursuing, and as quickly vanished following the noise, or rushing to some new conflagration. The Bonemen were equally as misdirected, bent solely upon destruction everywhere.

The wind had died down and the pitchy curtain of smoke and ashes from the burning tar and pine logs of the buildings mingled with the sulphurous pall that drifted in from the fields where the haystacks smouldered and sent up their mushroom columns. It became impossible to judge the course of the fight. That there was horrible industry going on about one was manifested by the strangled coughing and piteous cries that were borne along on the layers of sediment in the foul air.

A great, glad cry, rhythmical and wild, rose above the tumult. The incessant wailing of the Bonemen faltered as their ranks broke and they fell back from the walls. With hideous gesticulations and a final rebellious squall they took to their heels, fleeing in riot-

ous disorder across the meadow. Out in the fields one could see scattered groups of men chasing after the remnants of the Bonemen as they scurried for the woods. They chased them into the river where the Bonemen were broken up by the pounding waters of the rapids. They were fighting in the marshes belly deep in the bogs, slugging steadfastly at arms' length, driving one another deeper and deeper into the mud until some mad fortune provided a victor.

Within the fort which was ours again we were running from house to house, combing them from cellar to attic, scurrying up and down the alleyways, and poking and prying into every hiding place. Here a Boneman was routed from a burned outhouse. Another was apprehended as he cowered in the gutted cellar. The loaded carts drawn across the intersections proved to be consummate traps. We found the charred and broken bodies piled about them in shoals like the carcasses of sun-dried fish brought up and left by the tide. Others were found and dragged into the square and set upon, thumped and beaten and battered until their rickety cages were one with the dust. We scoured the woods and ran up and down the river looking for their spoor, but could find no sign that any had survived to escape into the wilderness.

THE Sable Valley cleaves the southern range of the Thunderers, permitting an egress of the sun directly upon the fort. Its spendid light crept up the canyon past the lambent walls and spread over the russet grasses to the river where it merged with the temporal mists, turning them a delicate red. The hedge-hopping whitethroat's enchanting madrigal floated sweetly on the air, and the marsh was alive with the excited

clamor of countless wildfowl. The fort was a bramble patch of smouldering ribs, a giant vertebrate, parched and cooked. Among the dead ruins the townspeople searched for their families, scrubbing and poking in the ashes in a pitiful audit of their possessions. Their worn, gray faces, grimy catafalques of despair, were smeared and streaked with the tears that trickled down their cheeks and dried there. The water trough in the square was filled with bodies, drowned trying to escape the smoke during the night. Some hung over the sides down which the water had slopped and a body, face down, moved gently, bumping its head against the tub end. A thick blanket of ashes floated on the water and covered them, giving all a simple anonymity in death. Everywhere forms were sprawled on the ground, awkwardly, crookedly, staring blankly at the sky. Some lay locked together, unwitting antagonists in the murk and obscurity of the night's holocaust. Everywhere we found the curious medallions with the black and crooked crosses. Crazy Hat, indeed!

We had won, but at a bloody cost.

* * *

Now in November, the first bite of winter is in the air and the frost pinches one's nose. Soon the gelid host will be upon us and the mountain heights will again bear their augmented and majestic mantle of white. The crystal necklaces of ice will cover the river, cold and still. Even now the bitter winds rattle and buffet the shutters in my rebuilt home. As I cross the room to adjust them the lowering sun touches the confining rim of the sea, its reflection transforming the clouds into a vast and glorious panorama of golden fleece and purple tapestry. I watched the light play upon the conical tops of the trees and move along the lofty escarp-

ment which overhangs the wooded banks of the river. I watched it touch upon something bright which moved slowly from side to side, twisting and turning, turning and flashing. A Bone-man, squat and horrid, stood at the crest indolently surveying the fort. A fringe of red tassels stirred restlessly on

his collar bones and the feathers in his skull cap stood up straight in the wind. The ubiquitous medallion gleamed once more and the sun disappeared in the crimson loam of the sea.

They would come again, but somehow, I was no longer afraid.

THE END

SONG OF INDIA



By FRANCES YERXA



INDIA is the land of mystery and enchantment! It is the land of mysticism, of weird rites, of strange religions, and stranger religious figures. And above all, it is interesting to consider some of the oddities that have stemmed from the land.

The sacred Ganges along whose shores the death-rites of the burning at the ghat, gives us a ghoulis feeling when we think of it. But even in Peshwar, that mysterious state which borders the little known land of Afghanistan we find strange and fascinating things.

Everyone knows of the continual border warfare that existed for a long time between British troops stationed in the Khyber Pass, and native Afghanistan raiders. It is not so well known however, that much of this warfare stemmed not so much from the inherent hatred of the Afghans for the British as the desecration of Afghan shrines by renegade Hindus.

Peshi Thar was a Hindu organizer who gathered to him, a miniature Army of renegades, criminals, outcasts and every sort of scum from the gutters of the edges of the bigger Indian cities.

Afflicted with the weird religious belief that he was a reincarnation of Buddha this strange Indian used his band of guerillas to make frequent raids across the Afghan borders. Special police and agents of the British as well as Afghan warriors attempted to discover the purpose of the raids which were brutal in the extreme. They failed to discover any pattern of events that would tell them what they wanted to know.

Peshi Thar, as arrogant and merciless as any tyrant who ever lived conducted his raids on a bold scale as time went on.

His practice was to swoop down with several hundred men on an isolated Afghan village and put it to the sword. Every single inhabitant was slaughtered, the huts of the poor people burned and the raiders would vanish across the Indian border from whence they came.

One peculiarity existed in this series of raids. Frequently corpses were found whose little fingers were missing. Police agents after much arduous work discovered that Peshi Thar was selling these grisly specimens for fantastic sums as love-potions. They were dried, ground up, and administered in

wine, much like the Chinese were accustomed to do with spiders.

With this discovery the police and military found the going easier and it wasn't long before Peshi Thar's gang was trapped. The military isolated the raiders in a small village immediately after their raid. After a furious pitched battle every one of the raiders, one hundred twenty-two of them, were killed.

Peshi Thar was identified and of course the trouble ceased at once.

Unfortunately such incidents, grisly and horrid as they were did not end with Peshi Thar's death. Other gangsters of a similar type proceeded with the same sort of work. Eventually, by nineteen twenty-two, the warfare had been stamped out.

India is jammed with events and tales such as the foregoing, all of them authenticated and documented. It is said that in the British Museum, a file has been prepared on such affairs and contains over thirty-thousand entries. The Indian custom of burning the body after death on a funeral pyre is not as weird as it may seem.

Such a method of allowing the soul to escape into the after life was also practiced by the Norsemen before the coming of Christianity, though the burning usually took place aboard shipboard.

We see a similar practice today in our cremation, though our objectives are considerably different. Nevertheless, the event is much the same. The pollution of the Ganges is a dreadful thing to imagine however in direct contrast to our sanitation. What makes it doubly horrible in our eyes, is the fact that the polluted water is regarded as extraordinarily sacred and is used for anointing, drinking and God knows what else.

It does not do to exhibit disgust or to smile at these practices. When what we regard as a barbarian is reproached by us for some primitive practices he always counters with equally incriminating evidence that we have failed in whatever we may have done.

Above all, who can deny that our gigantic wars make the primitive rites of murder of the less civilized peoples seem like child's play. We have applied science and technology to a degree that makes any other people's efforts apparently harmless!

PETE strode along the solid gold street feeling very much at peace with Heaven. His trumpet, tempered in the furnaces of hell by Nick himself (under duress, of course), gleamed with the golden fire of a perfect polish under his arm.

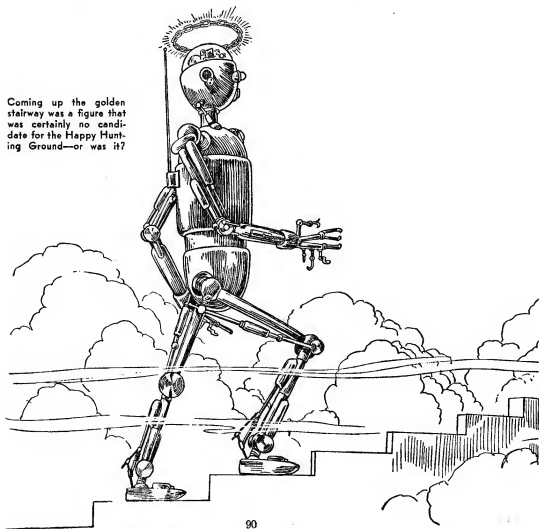
He hadn't felt so good since the day he had kicked Hitler down the golden stairs and watched him tumble off into the nether regions where he belonged. That had been a high spot in his career as gate keeper. It had been something he had looked forward to with pleasure long before it had happened.

Of course, that had given him only a brief satisfaction—nothing to compare with the time he had welcomed that preacher in. There had been several couples pestering him about wanting to get married. He had had to stretch a point or two or the preacher would never have made it . . . but everything had worked out all right.

In fact, everything was perfect. Sun shining, streets glistening richly, all the mansions slicked up spick and span.

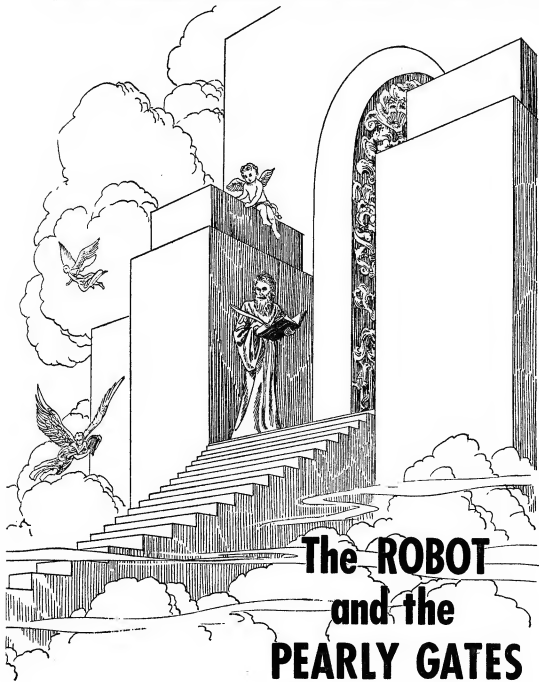
Pete's eyes lit up with a friendly gleam. The platinum and iridium front door of a molded-diamond, ten-story

Coming up the golden stairway was a figure that was certainly no candidate for the Happy Hunting Ground—or was it?



Pete had a tough decision to make when a robot came to the pearly gates and asked admission. Should he--or could he--let him in?

**By PETER
WORTH**



mansion just ahead opened. A bent and ragged figure was coming down the inlaid radium walk to the street where a four-horsepower chariot awaited. It was his old friend Jobe going out for his morning ride through the tenement section.

"Hi, Jobe," Pete said cheerfully. "How's the boils coming lately?"

"Heinz," Jobe said cryptically.

"Oh, I get it. Fifty-seven of them now. Huh, Jobe?" Pete shook his head sympathetically and continued down the street. Some day they would get a doctor in. Then Jobe could get his boils fixed up.

Pete's feeling of well being couldn't be made to stay down over a little thing like that. It was too nice a morning.

"Tum de tum tum—"

His eyes discovered a figure half a block ahead coming toward him. He waved a cheery good morning at the approaching man.

"Hi, Mose," Pete said when Mose came within comfortable ear shot.

"Good morning, Pete," Mose returned the greeting with a show of dignity. The gleam in his eye belied the dignified appearance. "What's cooking this morning?"

"Now you know nothing's cooking, Mose," Pete said.

"Oh yes there is," Mose said mysteriously.

"You must have heard something I haven't, then," Pete said. "The only one I've seen this morning is Jobe." He shook his head sadly. "Poor fellow. Boils bothering him something fierce. Wish we had a doctor around someplace."

"What Jobe should do," Mose said. "Is take one of my tablets with a glass of water before going to bed every night." His beard split open horizontally near the top, and the sounds of laughter poured out into the street.

Pete laughed politely. Silently he wished Mose would get a new line. Always bringing his tablets into the conversation. He made a mental note to steer the next Hollywood gag writer Mose's way.

"Well," he said, shuffling his feet impatiently. "What IS cooking then?"

"Don't know," Mose said. "But I just saw Izzy a few minutes ago and he looked quite put out about something. I'd see him before going to work this morning if I were you."

"Izzy?" Pete echoed. "Pay no attention to his looks. All that's wrong with him is a good healthy crop of stomach ulcers. When they act up he worries about the future."

"Just the same," Mose said seriously. "You know as well as I do that he has a rep to maintain. He hasn't spouted in some time. He's about due. Better talk to him, Pete."

"Gnats!" Pete said. "Oh, pardon me. I mean nuts. I forgot you're a vegetarian."

He continued down the street hastily.

There was a worried frown on his face. What Mose had said about Izzy might spell trouble. However, Pete's perfect feeling of well-being asserted itself again. The sun smiled at him. His sandals scraped along the golden pavement in steady rhythm, and everything was okay.

"Tum de tum tum—" He patted his trumpet affectionately. In the mirror surface of the front of a solid silver mansion belonging to Abe Lincoln he saw that his halo was on straight.

Yes, it was a wonderful morning.

HE TURNED the corner onto the main street. Three blocks ahead were the gates. Personally Pete thought them an architectural monstrosity, but they had been designed by the boss' son so he didn't dare say anything

about it.

Made of the finest of white alabaster, the two towers that formed the sides of the entrance rose straight until they were lost in dizzy heights far above. There they drew together to form a solid circular pillar that rose still farther, ending with a dome top. From a distance of several hundred miles they looked exactly like the eye of a needle.

The gates themselves were designed simply of purest gold. The whole thing gave the same impression as modernistic streamlined design down on Earth; but Pete, for the life of him, could see nothing architectural about them.

Right now the sun was shining through the gate opening about a hundred feet up, but almost completely hidden behind the right hand pillar. Its rays reflected from the gleaming alabaster surface of the left pillar and sent a shaft of golden-white light across the sky that looked like nothing else than a thread sticking through the eye of a needle.

It looked like an over-simple, futuristic monstrosity from the mad brain of a Hollywood publicity moron, strictly out of place, towering up from the fairyland of golden minarets, ruby domes, ice-like diamond spires, and ornamental balconies of the palaces along the wide street of soft, warm gold which stretched right up to, and through the gates themselves.

Pete paused and looked at all this and shook his head over it as he had done every day, man and boy, since that day he had been signed on by the boss as gate keeper. It was an anachronism. That's all Pete had to say about it. It reminded him of a service station in a residential district.

His eyes dropped and settled on a figure fifty feet away, sitting before an easel. He watched while a bare arm

stole out from a white robe and guided a slim brush in a short stroke on the canvas resting on the easel.

"Angelo's getting in a rut," he said to himself. "Always painting the gates."

He sidled up behind the artist and watched sourly. The picture was nearly finished. It was almost photographic. And now the skilled hands of the artist were touching in that ray of light reflected through the opening like a thread through a needle.

The deep, vividly alive eyes of the artist glanced up at him briefly.

"Howdy, Mike," Pete said carelessly, "How's the paint business this A.M.?"

"Hokay," Angelo said cheerfully. "Righta now I gotta get theesa feenished before the light she change. You lika? No?"

"No," Pete agreed. "I no lika."

"Ho well," Angelo said shrugging his shoulders under his robe and making sure his halo was in place. "Hit's a job. I lika heem much more better thana to keepa da gates."

With three lightning-like strokes of the brush he finished. Pete looked at the painting and then at the scene as it really existed, and couldn't tell them apart except for size.

"You're purty good at that paint stuff," he said grudgingly. "Too bad you never learned to blow a trumpet. You'd have made a whizz at something worthwhile like that."

He stepped around Angelo and his easel and started on.

"Ho say! Pete!" Angelo called after him.

Pete stopped and turned around.

"Did you see Izzy?" Angelo called.

"No," Pete frowned. "Is he looking for me?—I mean, is Izzy looking for me?—well, you know what I mean!"

"Yah," Angelo called. "He's gotta

something to tell you, I theenk."

"What is it?" Pete asked sharply.

Angelo shrugged his shoulders expressively and spread out his hands.

"Trobbles, I theenk," he said. "You know Izzy."

"I'll say I do," Pete muttered, starting on again. "Durn prophets! They're worse than painters!"

IT TOOK just a little more effort to regain his feeling of well being this time. In fact, he had to stop before the palace of one of the three wise men from the East and study the beauty of its thousand fragile, ethereal towers, the magic weaving of golden design into its pearl and alabaster walls, and the play of color in the crystal-clear fountain that sprung from a ruby base and cascaded over sapphire and emerald to a huge, lathe-turned diamond bowl on a flat, gold-inlaid, pearl base.

"Tum te tum tum—" he hummed contentedly to himself as he again started on toward the gates.

A queer looking figure turned the corner half a block ahead and came toward him. It was a man who might have been quite tall if he had ever stood up straight. His skinny, narrow shoulders were hunched forward as far as it was possible for them to go. Not content with this, his neck continued the forward stretch so that his head preceded his body by almost a full step as he came forward in a half crouching glide that was his customary method of walking.

The hooked beak of a nose on his thin, ascetic face, his sunken black coals of eyes, and his pronounced black eyebrows, together with the sparse, forward-jutting beard would have made one think of a vulture in other surroundings. The strong wings carried at half mast behind helped that impression. In some subtle way the halo

above his head gave it an appearance of vulturelike baldness that added still further to the illusion.

Consequently, the snowy robe that draped the skinny body, and the golden harp cradled in one arm, seemed more the props of a wolf in sheep's clothing than the genuine accouterments of a saint in good standing.

None of this appearance seemed out of place to Pete. He had seen Izzy too many times to notice his appearance particularly. He noticed it even less this time.

All he noticed was the feverish fire in Izzy's eyes that told him Izzy was bursting with prophecy again.

"There you are, Pete," Izzy said loudly while still a quarter of a block away. "I've been looking all over for you."

"Then why in tarnation didn't you prophesy where I would be and go there?" Pete said maliciously.

"That's what I finally did," Izzy said with complete equanimity. "It was very simple, really."

He grinned wolfishly.

"Mike told me you were looking for me," Pete said cautiously, coming to a stop.

Izzy stopped a few feet away and peered at him intently. Suddenly he nodded his head.

"That's right, I am," he said. "Or was. Of course I'm not looking for you now. I've found you."

He grinned again briefly and licked his thin lips. His halo quivered vibrantly and his wings gave a couple of idle sweeps to keep the kinks out of them.

"Yes. You've found me," Pete encouraged.

"That's right," Izzy said inanely. He stroked his thin beard slowly while his eyes burned excitedly at Pete.

"Jobe said you were looking for me,

too," Pete said conversationally. "I think even Mose mentioned the fact. What's on your mind?" He chuckled nervously and shifted from one foot to the other.

"A prophecy," Izzy said seriously, his eyes glowing.

"A prophecy?" Pete echoed hollowly.

"Yop," Izzy agreed.

"That's interesting," Pete said doubtfully. "Anything I'd be interested in?"

"Oh, it concerns you, all right," Izzy said. His grin flashed briefly again. He stopped stroking his beard. His hand dropped slowly and paused at his waist.

He licked his lips again, nervously.

"It does, huh?" Pete said lamely. He shifted his feet again uneasily.

"Uh huh," Izzy said.

"Well," Pete swallowed loudly. "What does it say?"

"It's a riddle," Izzy remarked proudly. One of his wings preened upward slowly in a stretch.

"Riddle, huh," Pete said uncomfortably. "One of THOSE things. Well—what's the riddle?"

The fire in Izzy's black eyes seemed to double in intensity. An incredibly skinny and incredibly long hand moved outward and upward in the best dramatic style. The beak-like nose thrust even further forward, if possible. The thin-lipped mouth opened and paused, waiting for the uttering of the riddle.

Pete, behind his mask of skeptical disdain, was waiting more uneasily than he cared to admit even to himself.

Izzy's voice rose in nasal singsong.

*"What hell in all its pits cannot contain
And Heav'n in all its mansions doth
disdain,
Shall come enhal'd with circ' of clank-
ing chain*

*And 'mand admittance to the Heav'nly
plane.*

*If Pete should turn his face in cold
disdain*

*And 'sert that Heav'n this stranger
can't contain,*

*Then Pete no more shall toot his sweet
refrain*

*To welcome home the trav'ler to this
plane.*

*Nor will Pete's hands the gates swing
wide again,*

*Nor shall the lock his keys e'er more
contain;*

*Nor shall the book of Life inviolate
remain*

*Should Pete throw ope' the gates and
let him in."*

"That all?" Pete said with a show of disgust. "If it is I'd suggest you stick to prose. You slaughter the dictionary too much."

THE disgust was not real and both Pete and Izzy knew it. One cannot feel disgust in Heaven. Izzy disdained to answer this slight to his poetic gift which he considered second only to his gift of prophecy.

"Don't you see, Pete?" he said anxiously. "It predicts that whichever you do you're going to lose your job! There's no way out of it."

"Hah!" Pete snorted. "I've got a lifetime contract that NOTHING can break."

"Nothing?" Izzy asked slyly.

"Nothing," Pete said flatly. "Unless, of course, I let someone in that don't belong here. Someone whose name isn't in the book of life."

"Or don't let someone in whose name IS on the books?" Izzy suggested softly.

"Yeah. Sure," Pete agreed. "That's

just as bad."

Izzy chewed his lip thoughtfully. Suddenly his face brightened.

"What," he asked. "Would happen if you let someone in who really belonged here, but whose name wasn't in the book of life?"

"Well," Pete said carelessly. "Technically that would be a breach of contract, I suppose; but you know as well as I do that that's impossible. The recording angels keep the books up to date right to the minute. There isn't a living man whose name isn't entered in the books and scratched off again a dozen times a day. The minute he steps onto the golden stairs and starts the climb up here the recording angels take a final look to balance up the records so they're all straight by the time he gets to the top."

"But if there were a technical breach of contract—?" Izzy suggested.

"That would be bad," Pete admitted. "Old Nick is gunning for me. Of course he wouldn't dare show his face at the judgment seat. He's wanted on too many counts to risk it. I made him sore at me when I pulled a few strings to get my trumpet tempered."

He glanced at his trumpet and patted it affectionately.

"Anyone else?" Izzy asked slyly.

"Well," Pete said slowly. "Gabe is a little sore at me. Nothing but jealousy over the trumpet. Not enough for him to go gunning for my job."

"Oh no?" Izzy snorted skeptically. "It's common gossip that Gabe thinks you're after *his* job."

"Just because I like to play on the trumpet?" Pete asked incredulously. "Nonsense. I like my own job too well. Anyway he don't work until judgment day. Me,—on judgment day I'll be working overtime at the gates. He doesn't have to worry about me wanting his job."

He laughed weakly.

"Gabe says you want his job for the prestige," Izzy said.

"Gnats! I mean nuts!" Pete snorted. "My job has prestige too."

"Not as much as Gabe's, though," Izzy said. "At least that's what I've heard that Gabe thinks about it. Just be careful he doesn't stick you on a technicality. If he gets the chance—"

Izzy stalked away in his customary semi-crouch, his wings fanning lazily. Pete watched him dourly.

"Durn prophets," he muttered. "A saint's got a right to toot a trumpet if he wants to."

HE CONTINUED on toward the gate; but his cheery disposition had been ruined. In fact, if such a thing were possible in Heaven one might almost have said he was now a trifle—grumpy.

Connected to the left hand pillar inside the gates was a single story building of alabaster and gold inlay which housed the office where the recording angels wrote in the book of life, and where Pete retired when business was slack to practice on his trumpet without fear of waking the dead.

As he turned into the entrance to this building Pete tucked his trumpet more securely under his arm and pushed open the door of pure silver inlaid with gold in a simulated wood graining effect.

A medley of soft voices came from the large office as he entered.

"Recording." The angel at the switchboard glanced briefly at Pete with a nice smile, then returned to her work. "G as in gnu? I'll connect you."

Her deft fingers plugged a cord into a spot on the board too fast for the eye to follow.

"Recording. Smith? George Smith? Which George Smith? There are

eighty-three thousand, four hundred and twenty-eight George Smiths living at present. Just a moment. I'll connect you."

She plugged in another cord. A harried recording angel picked up the phone and said distractedly, "Just a moment please. I'm on another wire."

Pete paused near the main switchboard and surveyed this scene dourly. He often stopped at this same spot and glanced proudly over the office, thrilling to the efficient perfection of the staff, wondering how each angel managed to stay so sweet and fresh looking.

He wasn't wondering that now. In fact he hardly noticed how beautiful and sweet each angel appeared. He was wondering for the first time how it was possible for all this activity to go on, eternity after eternity, without even ONE error being made.

Here and there over the office a ripple of sweet smiles and cheery nods were directed at him as the various recording angels noticed that he had arrived.

Ordinarily this was wine to his soul. This morning it made him uneasy. He caught the eye of his personal secretary and went into his private office.

"Yes, Petey?" she said demurely when they were inside.

"Ahem," Pete cleared his voice loudly. "Put a stencil in the typewriter. Head it, 'Inter-office Memo'."

He sat down at his desk and propped his feet on the edge, making sure his robe didn't slide down and expose his limbs. He polished his trumpet with his sleeve while dictating.

"To all recording angels," he began. "Word has come to me straight from Izzy that an error is about to be made in this office. To be perfectly frank, he seems to think the error will be made by me; but as you know, I rely absolutely on the entries you each make in the

book of life, so that any error that might crop up will be through an oversight of one of you angels. I don't need to point out that inter-departmental jealousies would make such an error extremely uncomfortable at this time. Therefore I would like for all of you carefully to recheck all entries in the books against all living souls on Earth immediately. Signed: Pete."

The private secretary deftly yanked the stencil out of the typewriter and rolled it up, placing it in a long tube which she dropped into a receptacle. There was a brief noise as it dropped downward.

Seconds later the tube returned. The secretary opened it and extracted a mimeographed sheet. She glanced at it briefly, then handed it to Pete. He marked an O.K. on it and handed it back.

Less than a minute later duplicates of the sheet were deposited on the desk of each recording angel.

But somehow, this precaution did not dispel the feeling of unease tugging at Pete. He had a sneaking feeling that whatever he did wouldn't help—that what was to be WOULD be, regardless of anything he did to prevent it.

AS THE day wore on that feeling persisted. Usually, during the brief periods when no one was at the gates demanding admittance, he would retire to his private office and practice on his horn. Now he retired to his office and just brooded over Izzy's prophecy. What could it mean?

Whoever heard of a chain halo? Or did those words, "Shall come enhal'd with circ' of clanking chain," mean a chain halo? Maybe it meant some ghost that dragged chains across some attic was getting tired of it and wanted to come up. But all those were carefully listed and kept track of. There

could be no trouble from that source.

Whatever it might be, Hell couldn't contain it and Heaven would disdain it. That was the major clue to the riddle. Add to that the fact that if he let whoever it was through the gates it would be a technical breach of duty because the applicant's name wasn't in the book of life; and if he turned whoever it was away, it would be equally bad because whoever it was was obviously able to fulfill the entrance requirements otherwise.

Pete reviewed the setup in relation to the book of life. The instant a person was born his name went into the book of life. The only exceptions to that had been Adam, who wasn't born, and Eve, who was strictly an ersatz model. They had been welcomed in before his time, however, and he had never bothered to look up the records on that for procedure.

It was something that might furnish a hint on unusual procedure. He called the head librarian and had her bring him the case history.

He saw at once that things weren't kept so strictly then. Heaven had just started up. The overhead was simply terrific. There was absolutely no business except for a trickle of tourist trade from other planets. It was easy to understand how Adam had gotten in. In this day and age he would never stand a chance. The recording department had just started up and wasn't bothering much about the accuracy of the books. All the recording angels were just being broken in to the job and weren't really hep to their duties yet.

Why, the entries were even made in pen and ink! They hadn't installed the card index system and the automatic tabulators.

He handed the record book back to the librarian, **utterly discouraged.** After

she went out he tooted his trumpet half heartedly for a few notes, then gave it up.

A messenger angel knocked discreetly and came in, leaving a note from one of the recording angels. It read:

"A Joseph Blane has just started up the golden stairs. No one by the name of Joseph Blane has died during the last ten minutes. There are just three Joseph Blanes living, and they are accounted for at this moment.

Pete scribbled under the note, "Check into this from your books." He handed the note back to the messenger angel and sent her to the ghost section.

It came back with the added note, "There is a Joseph Blane haunting a house at 4735 Purple St., Saginaw, Michigan; but he is still there at work."

Pete thought a minute. A possibility occurred to him. He added a further note to the bottom of the sheet.

"Any Joseph Blanes brought to your attention lately?"

"Take this to Intelligence," he ordered the messenger. "They always have a man or two spying on the gates of Hell. Maybe he escaped from there."

The answer came back in five minutes.

"Hell unusually quiet today. There's an air of tense waiting. Each incoming victim carefully screened as though Nick were afraid. No Joseph Blanes. A Josephine Haines entered Hell yesterday, though, if that's any help."

"It isn't," Pete muttered.

HE LEFT the office and went out to the gates. The golden stairs stretched downward at a forty-five degree angle, disappearing far below in the haze that hid the Earth.

Here and there the stairs were peppered with slowly climbing figures, all

duly accounted for. Here and there an unquestionable saint could be seen, easily picked out because of the halo, developed during life.

The halo, of course, was not an infallible sign of sainthood. There were many souls with quite wonderful halos that were rank imitations on close inspection by an expert. On the whole, however, few reached the top of the golden stairs and stood before the pearly gates with their halos intact, if they were not the real thing.

Pete's experienced eye gauged how long it would be until the first of the lot got to the top. Giving a couple of toots on his trumpet to encourage the climbing souls he returned to his private office.

In spite of the upset of Izzy's prophecy, habit took hold and he was soon fast asleep in his regular morning nap. He was awakened some time later by the buzz of excitement outside. Something obviously was happening to cause such a buzz.

Still half asleep, he went hastily outside. There was quite a crowd of angels and other residents of Heaven gathered in front of the gates.

He pushed through to the front and then paused, a look of amazement and dawning bewilderment on his face. The recollection of the prophecy struck him like a blow on the head. He saw all too clearly now what it meant.

Standing just outside the gate among the other applicants for admission into Heaven was—There were no words to describe it; in gross matter it would have been at once recognized as nothing more nor less than a robot! But gross matter could not possibly climb the golden stairs to the gates of Heaven.

And if there had been any question on that score it was quickly dispelled by the thing floating just over what served as a head on the thing. There,

floating in a field of undulant, quivering, spiritual force, was a halo—but what a halo!

It was made of chain of purest gold, each link hovering in its place and linked into those on each side without actually touching.

As Pete stared, open mouthed, the thing shifted on its mechanical feet. The motion caused a ripple in the halo so that the chain links quivered against each other. A noise was set up from this clanking of the links. The noise was a high, clear, vibrating tone as of a thousand harp strings.

Dazedly Pete's eyes began a close inspection of the rest of the thing. The torso was a cylinder of stainless steel. The arms, legs, hands and feet were designed for usefulness rather than simply to imitate the human form.

The neck was obviously nothing more than a universal joint. The head was human only in the location of the various parts. A round diaphragm was where the mouth should be. Two lenses were set in the surface where the eyes of a man would be. There were two ears, slightly different than human in shape, but with a difference that spoke of acoustical improvement.

The scalp was brightly shining white plastic of some sort. The light shed from the chain halo made this plastic dome semi-transparent, hinting at wires and wheels and switches underneath in bewildering complexity.

There, as real as Heaven itself, stood the soul of a robot, waiting for admission! There was no doubt about it!

PETE groaned. He was beginning to see the trouble he was in for. Of course the name of the robot would never be in the book of life! Quite obviously, from the wonderful halo, the soul of the robot was of the purest of the pure in every way. Hell could never

contain anything as pure and noble as this thing patently had been during its gross existence. Nor was there any provision in Heaven for providing the rewards for good deeds to a robot.

He couldn't let the robot in because it wasn't listed in the books. He couldn't turn it away either! This, beyond question was the mysterious Joseph Blane! The soul of a robot!

In all the excitement no one had noticed Pete in the crowd of spectators. He needed time to think, if possible. He slipped quietly back into the crowd and scurried to his private office.

By the time he got there he had a tentative plan. He dialed the number of the boss's private secretary.

"Gimme the boss," he demanded hastily when he made the connection. "This's Pete."

"Do you have an appointment?" a silvery voice asked.

"No!" Pete moaned. "This is Pete, the gate keeper. I work here. This is an emergency. Connect me with the boss. Please hurry."

"I'm sorry," the voice returned calmly. "You must have an appointment. I'll connect you with the secretary who makes appointments."

There was a click that indicated he was cut off. At once there was another click. Another silvery voice spoke.

"Look," Pete said, cutting her off. "I don't want an appointment. This is an emergency. Anyway, when did this appointment business start? I always thought anyone could talk to the boss any time they wanted to."

"You do want an appointment?" the new voice said. "Then you must have the wrong number. What number are you calling?"

"Yes, I want an appointment," Pete said hastily. "That is, I don't want an appointment. I want to talk to the boss. Right now."

There was a pause.

"I'm sorry," the voice came over the phone. "There is no time available right now. The earliest I could give you would be the first Thursday in October, three months from now. Would ten thirty be convenient for you?"

"Can't you understand?" Pete exclaimed desperately. "This is an emergency! I've GOT to talk with the boss NOW."

There was another pregnant pause.

"Very well," the silvery voice said. "I'll connect you with the secretary in charge of emergencies."

Another double click brought a new voice. Somewhat heartened at having progressed to the third secretary, Pete made his demand with more confidence.

"What was your name again?" the voice asked.

"Pete," Pete said. "Pete, the gate keeper."

A pause.

"Would Wednesday, September the twelfth be convenient for you Pete?" the voice asked.

"Confound it young lady," Pete said. "This is an emergency."

"I know," the voice replied. "That is the first emergency time open."

"I've GOT to talk to him NOW," Pete said weakly.

"We will do the best we can," the voice said sweetly. "If you will leave your phone number we will call you in case there is a cancelation."

"Look," Pete tried again. "This is a matter of life and death."

"I'm sorry," the voice said sweetly. "You must have the wrong number. What number were you calling?"

Pete banged the receiver down. It missed the hook and nearly carried him to the floor.

"What's this place coming to?" he groaned.

"I'm sorry," the receiver said sweet-

ly. "I couldn't hear what you said. Will you speak INto the receiver please?"

Pete looked at the thing as though it were something distasteful and dropped it on the hook.

FOR the first time in his long career he fervently wished there were a lawyer available.

"There must be SOME way out of this picklement," he muttered. "I've GOT to think of something. I can't stall much longer or I'll be open to an accusation of dereliction of duty."

He peeked out the window and saw that the crowd had grown considerably. He let out another groan when he saw the tall form of Gabe among the spectators. As he looked, Gabe turned his eyes in the direction of Pete's office. There was a look of quiet satisfaction in them.

No question about it—Gabe saw the possibilities of the situation.

Pete cupped his hands behind his back and began hastily to pace the floor. His mind was at feverish pitch.

"It's hopeless," he muttered.

He stopped his pacing and took his trumpet off the desk where he had lain it beside his typewriter. There was a tear in his eyes at the imminent prospect of losing his job.

Suddenly his head jerked up under the force of a startling thought. A look of amazed joy spread over his face.

"By all the saints!" he exclaimed softly. "That's IT!"

He tucked his trumpet under his arm with an affectionate pat and left the office. Outside he shoved through the crowd to the gates. Every eye was upon him now.

With a flourish he inserted his key in the gate and turned it. The gate swung open.

Pete pretended not to notice the robot soul. He started calling out the roll

from the sheet the recording angel had placed on his desk.

Finally he came to the name he wanted.

"Dr. Frank Updenmyor," he called.

A wizened soul stepped forward timidly.

"Inventor of the robot lung," Pete droned professionally. "Also of many other robot gadgets that have been a boon to suffering humanity. Entered with the rating of novice saint, third class."

Dr. Frank Updenmyor started forward with a glad look on his face.

At this moment Pete said hastily, "Joseph Blane, enter."

The robot stepped through the gates. Pete watched the expression on Gabe's face with secret amusement. Out of the corner of his eye he saw Izzy hovering on the outskirts of the crowd. Izzy caught his eye and shook his face sadly. Pete grinned at him and turned back to his business.

The crowd drifted away. Finally all the souls had been either passed through the gates or tossed down the stairs to the nether regions below.

Pete returned to his private office and sat down, waiting. He hadn't long to wait. Almost immediately the receptionist came in and announced that two representatives of the Judgment Seat were there to see him.

Pete regretted the fact that he didn't have an expert staff of secretaries to give them the runaround for a couple of months. He would have to see about that later.

"Show them in," he said briefly.

The two stately angels came in. One of them was carrying a folded, plain white paper. He handed it to Pete.

Pete took it.

"That's a summons," the angel said. "You are to appear at the judgment seat in three days and answer to the

charge of breach of contract, preferred by Gabe against you."

"I'll be there," Pete said calmly. He watched with amused eyes until they closed the door behind them. Then he rang for his secretary.

"Have Dr. Updenmyor and Joseph Blane, the robot, sent in here," he ordered. She smiled worriedly and left. Pete watched her go.

"Tum de tum tum," he hummed in high good humor as he waited.

THE auditorium of the Judgment Seat was jammed to overflowing with spectators. Pete paused at the entrance, Joseph Blane, the robot, by his side.

There was a hush of expectance as he strode down the aisle. Gabe was already there, waiting.

Pete saw Izzy in the third row from the front. His skinny face was working nervously from the motions of chewing gum. All eyes were turned toward Pete and the robot who followed him with a sound of tinkling glass as his walking movement set the links of his chain halo to vibrating against one another.

Pete took his place calmly. He looked over at Gabe at the other table and hummed, "Tum de tum tum."

Gabe frowned in puzzlement.

A really remarkable specimen of an angel came in and sat down on the Judgment Seat.

"The Judgment Seat is now occupied," a voice somewhere droned. "Let the business at hand commence."

Another monotonous voice droned out the reading of the charges against Pete. A third took up and read the details of Pete's contract with all the fine print and wherefores and whereases.

Gabe took the witness stand and repeated what he had seen at the gates. Pete was called to the stand and asked if he had admitted Joseph Blane. He

admitted it.

The book of life was brought in and shown to contain no Joseph Blane. The clause in Pete's contract enjoining him from allowing admittance to anyone not in the book of life was again read. The case was summed up.

Finally came the request Pete had been waiting for.

"Have you anything to say?"

Pete stood up leisurely and glanced around at the tensely waiting throng.

"Well," he said. "I can't think of anything much to say. One thing, though. While the book of life is here, take a look in it and see if you can find the name, Underwood 291224."

There was a loud rustling of leaves in the hushed expanse as someone turned them, searching. Finally there was a loud sound as the book was closed with finality.

"No," a voice said. "There is no such name in the book of life."

Pete seemed to be surprised at this announcement.

"Well," he said. "I had always thought there must be since my friend Gabriel well knows that that spirit is in Heaven, and moreover works for him occasionally. In fact he brought that spirit into heaven through his own private entrance some time ago, rather than admitting it through what he considers the correct entrance for spirits, under my jurisdiction."

There was a storm of whispering voices as Pete sat down. Gabe had not waited for Pete to sit down before he jumped up and drew himself up to full dignity.

"I trust," he began with deadly calm. "That Pete realizes the seriousness of the charge he has made against me. The charge against him is breach of contract. He has accused me, falsely, of a crime unheard of—the smuggling in of a spirit whose name is not in the

book of life, and through a private entrance entrusted to me as a high honor in keeping with my special position as official trumpet blower."

The storm of voices that hushed while Gabe spoke took up again with greater violence.

The Archangel in the Judgment Seat looked out over the audience piercingly.

"My friends," he began. There was a respectful silence. Throughout all Heaven radios were turned on. In the mansions of lepers and beggars cabinet combination models were humming softly while the video screen brought close the face of that exalted Archangel. In the tenement hovels of former millionaires the cheap, worn out, obsolete portables whined and sputtered, while that golden voice spoke.

"My friends," he repeated. "It has become clear to me what is in the hearts of these dear ones before the seat of judgment. It is my duty, and a pleasant one," he smiled broadly. "To dismiss the charges against Pete, and to say that there are no charges against Gabe. Before permitting Pete to explain what is so apparent to me, I wish to point out that Gabe has his own private ingress and egress to Heaven for the pursuit of business. Pete has no need of such a private port of entry, since he is in charge of the public gate. With that slight word of explanation I will now permit Pete to explain. Then I will leave."

PETE stood up. Every eye was on him in this, the greatest moment of his long existence.

"It's all very simple," he said modestly. "If my statements are read back you can all see for yourself that I made no charge or accusation against Gabe. If he'd only stop and think, he'd remember that the name, Underwood 291224 is the name of a typewriter,

which, because of its noteworthy service to Peter Worth on Earth, was brought to Heaven by Gabe himself after it was laid to rest. Of course, he didn't bring the gross typewriter, but the spiritual counterpart, the soul of that typewriter. All our modern equipment is the spiritual counterpart of the same equipment on Earth.

"I have just acquired," Pete went on. "A piece of equipment to perform some of my more mechanical duties. That piece of equipment is Joseph Blane, the robot. It's all quite legal and according to long established custom. Hereafter the gates will be opened by machinery, in the form of Joseph Blane, the soul of a robot man. Everyone knows that any piece of equipment on Earth that has performed its duties well and has done only a good work lives forever. Its soul continues after the gross form is scrapped or destroyed. Joseph Blane is no exception."

The uproar began again. Pete held up his hands in a gesture of silence.

"You might as well get used to Joseph," he said. "His inventor, Dr. Updenmyor, says robots are in production down on Earth now. Human robots. Their names aren't in the book of life. But before long there'll be plenty of souls of robots coming up the golden stairs and entering Heaven as standard equipment."

Pete stepped down onto the golden carpet and started up the aisle. Izzy crowded past others in the third row and hurried after him.

"It looks like my prophecy was true after all," he remarked nonchalantly. "Of course, you have to give up the trumpet, you know. That's part of the prophecy."

"No it isn't," Pete said. "Your prophecy said I would only have to give up the trumpet if I turned Joseph away. I let him in."



Pattern For Destiny

By Chester Smith

The fate of the Earth depended on the nobility of a lowly forest deer--if he failed, it meant invasion from space!



The lead ship smashed
to bits against—nothing!

BUT, . . .” THE youngest of them began.

He subsided at a look from one of the others. The look said, “Quiet! Duis Moab speaks!”

“ . . . aye,” the gentle, low-pitched voice went on, as if the owner hadn’t heard the opening of the young

man’s sentence, “I see many things . . .”

A sigh went up from the rest. Duis Moab was the wisest of them all. His silver-haired head was bowed over the quartz crystal and his eyes were intent on what was going on in its depths. The others leaned across the polished face of

the round table about which they had gathered and peered with sober, all-intent gaze at Duis Moab. At his words they nodded in unison, as though he had said the wisest thing they'd ever heard.

"... I see many things," he went on in that low, yet compelling voice. "I see many strange craft poised over a sphere. It is a planet, one of many in that Universe, and it is called, Earth.

"There are many of these craft . . . I see and hear those within. They are from another Universe. They have come a long way. Once they had a home. Now they have nothing. War has taken everything from them. But they were deserving of that fate. Now they ride high above this Earth planet and study it. In their minds is a question. Can they conquer it?

"On Earth they have discovered a fact known through the ages, that if one can split an atom, one can make the most devastating explosive known to man, or Gods! They have yet to discover that it can also destroy them."

"But . . ." the youngest began again, and this time went on despite the warning glances of the others, "Duis Moab, I beg of you; it has always been one of your precepts, one with which I from infancy have been taught is one you never permit others to forget—that precept being not to meddle in the affairs of . . ."

"True, Gaan Jike," Moab said. It was hard to say whether he had heard or not, since he did not look up from the sphere. Yet his ears and senses were always alive to what was going on about him. "But every precept, every principle of any philosophy, of any race or creed, has at one time or another a problem which forces one to make an exception. I think we have such a case here. Soon or late you were bound to ask this question. Now I must give

you the answer. There is not a single thing but which has not a pattern of behavior, of being, all of which *we* hold in control. *We* are the judges, and the jury, and the EXECUTIONERS!"

A deep sigh went around the table at the words.

Moab continued:

"These spheres, poised so menacingly above this Earth planet are part of an ordained pattern. Their residence has been destroyed. It was in their pattern to seek the Earth. But somewhere one of the—shall we call them—cogs, in the wheel of this pattern, slipped. It is now up to us to decide whether or not they shall make a new home on Earth. For if they do, then they must first wage war. And that can destroy the peoples who live on this planet.

"The pattern of those on Earth too, has changed. The pattern for them was destruction! It can still be. They are for the most part fools, destructive, violent, mercenary, having all the vices and so few of the virtues that it were better they cease to exist. But those who will supplant them are cast in the same mold. So we now must judge.

"Here! Look ye in the crystal . . ."

They looked and the clouds which scurried across the quartz face parted, and they saw a forest scene. A small animal played there. But from one side another crawled on its belly toward the small animal. And a third suddenly appeared on the scene, one much like the first but larger, with an immense spread of horns springing from its head.

Duis Moab waved his hand over the crystal ball and the scene vanished. His eyes turned toward the nearest man, then slowly went seeking the eyes of every one about the table. At last his look came to the end of the circle.

"Of all the planets in all the Universes, Earth is the one alone which

has a world in which animals live," Moab said. "That has been the only reason why Earth has hardly ever been bothered. The few times when the sins were too great to be denied we have had to take measures. But the sins have always had to be great. Now we must judge. But on another basis. Shall we slip the cog to another notch . . .?"

The one called Gaan Jike knit his brows. It was true that Moab was the wisest, the most-high in the council. But Jike was also a Ti-Titan. He saw no reason for what the other was doing. Animals! Why should they be made an exception . . .?

"They, too, have a span of life, and of course a thread which must be woven. Let their actions call for judgment," Moab said gravely in answer to the other's silent question.

THOUGH Rapok's ears might have deceived him his nose didn't. The sound had come from a single throat. But he knew there were two animals. There was no mistaking the *smell* of wolf!

He leaped the tiny brook, bounded with tremendous strides along the narrow run the deer used to the pond and sprang into the clearing from which the smell and sound had come. Nor did he pause for even the slightest instant as his eyes took in the scene a few yards in front of him.

A doe, her head turned to the horror perched on her back, was trying to drag herself to safety, though there was no place for her where safety lay. Rapok saw, even as his last leap carried him to the doe's side, that the wolf on her back had ripped the tendons out of the right hind leg. Now it was trying to reach the throat and make the kill.

Though Rapok's approach had been made with the silence of light, some in-

stinct of self-preservation made the wolf's head turn at the very moment Rapok's leap was in mid-air. With the swiftness of lightning the grey shape slid from his prey's back and shot into the haven of the forest. Rapok bel-lowed once in anger and frustration then turned to the slender, lovely, help-less thing stretched before him.

Tiny pleading sounds came from the doe's throat. They begged to be released from the pain and terror it was undergoing. Rapok pawed the moss. His head, surmounted by the canopy of his armament—eight furry points of flesh-ripping bone—turned this way and that. He wondered where the others of the tribe were. Surely they couldn't be far. He raged inwardly that this slender and lovely female should have been allowed to stray. But Samor, the chief, had interests of his own . . .

Once more the pleading sounds reached his consciousness. He saw then, that the wolf had torn a great gash from the back of the doe. She was going to die. But she was going to die in horrible pain, and alone. To die in pain was as natural as being born in pain. But alone . . .

The great brown eyes of the doe looked deeply into his. A message sparked from his eye to hers. She turned her head at what she read and even as he lowered the spiked head to charge, he thought he had seen forgiveness in her eyes. It was over and quickly so. One terrible thrust and the doe had died instantly, her heart pierced by several of the prongs.

Rapok backed away. Suddenly, like a dancer pirouetting, he whirled. Just in time. A half-dozen bucks had charged into the shallow clearing. At their head was Samor. And in Samor's eyes was an expression of utter triumph. He trumpeted the charge and his fol-

lowers bounded forward. They knew only what their eyes saw, the dead doe and Rapok, his points still dripping blood. There were no questions to be asked. The evidence lay before them.

Rapok met the charge of the first, a buck barely in his adult stage and parried the weak thrust. But he was not quick enough to sidestep the two who came from the sides. They each managed to get in a thrust before Rapok fought clear. He shifted on his hind quarters, whirling to face one then another, his head lowered and his formidable armament always presenting itself to the others. Though their courage was as great as his, his skill was much the greater. Only Samor might have matched it. But the huge buck seemed always to be the last to attack.

Rapok fought a delaying action. He didn't want to kill. These bucks attacking him were once his playmates, his friends. Now in their eyes was an undying hatred. As far as they were concerned his action in killing the doe put him beyond the pale. The business of fair play was not for such as he. He was now as the wolf, to be attacked by as many as possible and without compunction.

Suddenly Rapok whirled, showed them his heels and leaped a thorn barrier against which he had maneuvered himself. It didn't seem possible that it could be leaped. But Rapok did it! The last thing he saw as he whirled was a small group of does entering the arena. In the lead, as befitted one as beautiful and stately as she, strode Fraga. His heart sank as he loped off into the forest tangle. For now Samor would have her . . .

THE long grey shape moved slowly, surely through the brush. Sato, the wolf, was on the prowl for food. His

ears pricked forward on his wedge-shaped head and his nostrils were alive to every scent abroad, particularly the scent of deer. A thin thread of saliva dripped steadily along the lines of his jaw. Now and then Sato turned his head to his right; his mate trailed him by a few steps but was running on a parallel line with him. They had been following the herd of deer for two days now, always down-wind to them.

Soon, Sato knew, Samor would relax his guard, and then one or more of the fawns would die. Sato and his mate were very hungry. But the long trail would come to a satisfactory conclusion. Sato was a very patient killer!

A half-mile to the rear a huge shape suddenly lifted its head from the bunch of grass it was munching on and sniffed the air. A puzzled look came into the warm eyes. Suddenly they were no longer puzzled. Rapok had identified the scent. Killer wolves! Their scent was as sharp as the tribe's, *nor was it far behind!*

The long muscles in the fore and hind legs bunched and uncoiled like springs in action. Rapok no longer cared about concealment or whether Samor and the others knew of his presence. The tribe was in danger. He knew what it was Sato and his mate were after. The fawns! They were young, not wise to the ways of forest life, not knowing or caring of the dangers which beset them. They ran about, knowing only that it was wonderful to be alive. So Rapok ran headlong down the narrow path which only a short while before Samor and his tribe had used.

Sato no longer ran low to the ground. And now his mate was at his side. The kill was at hand. The deer were feeding. Sato knew almost to the instant it happened, when one of the fawns would strike out for itself. There! A sly young one, its eyes warily on the watch

to see if its movements were observed, was sidling away from the herd. Not even its mother noticed it slip away.

Now the fawn was in a small clearing. The others were half-hidden by low shrubs, brush and trees. It saw a tasty bit of feed not far from the trail. It danced lithely forward. The hush of death settled over the forestland.

The she-wolf no longer cared about concealment. Her hunger had gone too long without appeasement. A single leap and she was at the far end of the clearing. Another and she was almost on the fawn. At that very instant it lifted its head, turned and saw the approaching grey doom. It stood, petrified, fear rooting it to the spot. Then, in that long instant, between death and life, the wolf struck!

The fawn died instantly, its throat ripped to shreds and the life blood crimsoning the lovely coat. Swift as a bird starting in flight, the she-wolf lifted the dead fawn in its mouth and started to her mate. But she took only a single step. There was time only for recognition—the she-wolf saw the doom she was to meet, a great buck deer whose spread of antlers was the largest she had ever seen. Then those antlers bit deep in a half dozen places, and death for her was not so quick, more painful, but just as inevitable as it was for the fawn.

Rapok shook the body of the she-wolf loose. Time was precious. He knew that her mate was not far off. Probably hidden under those bushes near the fir trees . . . He was just in time. The great furry body of Sato was a grey comet plummeting out of the brush, seeking to destroy Rapok.

A NEW hunger had taken the place of the old for Sato. The sheer mad hunger of destruction filled every fibre of the wolf's being. This thing which

had killed his mate had to be destroyed! He was in mid-air before he realized that the buck was a familiar one. It was the very one who had chased him from the kill a few days before. And now the buck had killed his mate.

Though Rapok was not as lithe, as sinewy in his movements as Sato, he was well armed. The great canines of the wolf clicked emptily in air as Rapok twisted away. But Rapok was not to get away lightly. Sato missed with his first leap. Now he came in low and fast. Rapok shifted lightly trying to present his formidable antlers always to the fore. But the wolf was not interested in a long drawn-out battle. He wanted to get in quick, slash at vulnerable places and get away. If only he could get at those tendons at the hind-quarters . . . ?

Rapok read the other's mind. Twice he barely managed to evade the other's lightning-like leaps, each time, however, feeling the fangs strike and tear. But Rapok didn't care. The wounds Sato was dealing were minor. Rapok had in mind a maneuver which would end the battle. Once more Sato came in low and hard. And again Rapok let him come. Suddenly Sato sprang. And like a spring bending in the middle, the wolf's body turned and the great head twisted downward toward the tendons of one leg. But Sato for once was slow. Or perhaps Rapok was swifter. For the buck had whirled at the last second and kicked backward with one leg. The hoof caught Sato a little low; had it been a few inches higher it would have torn the head from the body. But the blow ripped the flesh from the wolf's chest and shoulder. Sato was hurled to one side as though he were a broken doll. But it was not a mortal blow and though it did terrible damage it did not kill him. A howl of anguish was torn from his lips as he turned and ran limp-

ing from the arena.

A trumpet call of victory broke from Rapok.

As though in echo, a half-dozen voices answered, and from the edge of the clearing a number of buck deer broke into the open as though they had been but waiting the finish of the fight to make their presence felt. And once more Rapok fled at their approach.

FRAGA nuzzled the fawn at her side.

There was more than worry in her eyes. Ever since Samor had led them to the winter feeding grounds only to find that a forest fire had wiped out every bit of feed, grass, root and branch, nothing but misfortune had tagged them. Now the first snow had come; patches of it ribbed the bare ground and made patterns on boulders and upland rock. A wild wind tore through the few trees remaining after the fire's ravaging tempest. It was the forerunner of wilder, more bitter winds. With them would come snows, snows which would pile up into drifts so large that even a buck would find trouble breaking through.

She turned aside and looked at her mate, Samor. The huge buck had dipped his muzzle into a patch of snow. She saw the powdery flakes scatter. But the lips came away from the white, empty of food. The tribe was scattered over several acres, each trying to find enough food for itself to sustain life. Fraga knew the ways of the forest. Each for himself. Once more she nuzzled the shivering fawn at her side.

A tiny whimpering sound came from the fawn.

Fraga suddenly thought of Rapok. Why he came to mind she didn't know. It had been several weeks since the fight between him and Sato. She knew he was somewhere about; she had seen him several times, and more than once

he had been a phantom shape dimly seen in the forest. Her heart felt an unaccustomed heaviness. It had lain between him and Samor, but since Rapok had killed the doe there hadn't been any question in which direction her choice lay. She chose Samor. *An outlaw must run alone.*

Her head came up. Her nostrils dilated and contracted in sudden spasms. The rank odor of wolves was on the air again. Close this time. The wolf pack, headed by Sato, was gathering courage. Another few days of hunger and they would attack. The tribe of which Samor was chief had been large. But Samor had been a jealous buck, and one who brooked no interference. One by one the other bucks had fled, taking their mates and young along with them. Now there were perhaps a dozen left, bucks, fawns and does. And unless food was found there wouldn't be any.

Sato and his pack would see to that.

She looked about for her mate. He wasn't far off nor was he alone. By his side was a young doe, barely out of her fawnhood. Samor shook the splendid antlers and pawed the ground. The admiration he was seeking lay in the doe's eyes. Fraga could almost read the other's mind. It would be nice to mate with Samor . . .

Fraga moved off, the fawn still at her side. Samor's amours could wait. Her young had to be fed.

Darkness spread its sable wings over the forest. One by one the herd found sleeping places. Then slowly piercing the darkness came a feather-light fall of snow. It was the kind which would last all through the night and was the first of many to come.

IN THE morning they awakened to find that the snow was already high. Worse, a high wind had risen and was sweeping the snow into drifts.

Better grounds had to be found and quickly. Samor bellowed his command for the rest to follow. He knew somewhere close was a river. On the opposite bank, if he remembered rightly, was a stretch of ground which might give food. But they had to wait until the river was frozen over.

Once more they went on the march. Now Samor didn't care about the pack hard on the tribe's heels. He had known of their stalking from the beginning following Rapok's kill of Sato's mate. It was another of the things he was going to even up with the outlaw when the time came. It seemed that trouble and Rapok walked hand in hand. They shouldn't have let him escape when they cornered him after he had killed the doe.

Samor led them directly across the flank of the ridge. The way was hard, stony, filled with patches of slick ice which made the going even harder. Now and then one of the deer would slide on the ice, but always it would manage somehow to recover its footing. The tree line grew more sparse. Open spaces became wider until there was just the great expanse of snow before them. Samor got his bearings then.

He wondered as he turned to his flock whether it was too late or not. The wolves had abandoned their game of hide-and-seek. Now they were in the open too. He could see their dark shapes against the snow a hundred or so yards in the rear. They were spread out, as though ready for the attack. Then Samor saw something else. A giant buck was scrambling along the ridge, but on a higher level than he had led his tribe. There was no doubt of the identity of the strange buck. It was Rapok.

Samor turned and trotted forward again. His goal was not far off now. He turned inward away from the slope. The

rest followed. Now he was following a path others had trod before. Though it was slight, barely to be seen, Samor knew where it led. Twisting and turning, the path led down through the snow until it ended on the tree line a thousand feet below. Here the going was easier. But it was also easier for the wolf pack following hard on their heels.

Once they were within the boundaries of the forest Samor called commands for the tribe to stay close to one another. For it would be here the greatest danger lay. There were no runs within this forest. No trails crisscrossed the up and down terrain. Instinct chose the way. And for the animals, instinct was as good as a lighted path.

But if instinct guided the tribe of Samor, it also told Sato and the collection of ravening wolves that now was the time to attack. He had watched the ranks of buck deer grow thin as the march progressed. He watched them in their vain search for food. The once full flanks were thin now. And the proud heads drooped a bit as they struggled forward. Only the does watched their fawns.

Sato timed his attack perfectly. Samor and the others had arrived at a particularly tangled part of the forest. Here the growth of trees harbored traps of deep snow and the going was slow; a mis-step could mean death in a drift. Here it was that the trap was sprung.

They came at the deer singly and in pairs, striking at the weakest. A fawn felt the first of the terror. It went down under a simultaneous attack by two of the enemy. But before it did, the doe which had been trotting ahead turned and went to its defense. She used her tiny hooves in slicing, pounding blows, forgetting all danger to herself. She fought a losing battle. For though she

might have won against the two, she couldn't stand under another attack launched by another pair. They ripped the soft body to shreds and tore at the flesh then and there, for their hunger was as great as those they were attacking.

But though Sato and his wolves found the weak, they also found the strong. Here and there a buck lashed out at and caught a wolf. Usually one blow ended the fight. Or, one of the bucks would lower his head and charge into a group of the enemy, ripping them with antlers far more terrifying than canines. Samor fought like mad, leaping here to kick and there to use his points, but he knew it was a losing battle. Too many bucks had deserted. And the wolves were concentrating on the does and their young . . .

RAPOK had seen the others turn off the ridge and start for the tree line below. He also knew the spot for which Samor was heading. Only he knew Samor was making a mistake. For had Samor more bucks Rapok would have understood. As it was Rapok knew the wolves were but waiting an opportunity to attack. And in the tangled growth and heavy drifts of the forest would lie their best chances. So it was that he wasn't far behind when the wolves made their bid.

He burst on the scene like a great red destroyer. He leaped to the attack like an avenging demon. He seemed to be everywhere at once, striking simultaneously at a pair who were trying to bring down a doe, killing them both with hammer blows of his antlers. Then turning with the speed of lightning, he leaped away to whirl and kick to death another who was ready for an attack on a fawn shivering in fright against a bole of a tree. Time after time he seemed to be caught in a grey whirlpool

of furry bodies. But always he was able to fight clear, though never without being wounded. The red coat was stained a brighter red by a dozen slashes from shoulder to throat. Yet somehow the teeth never found a vulnerable spot. Rapok had a single objective, Sato. The great gaunt wolf was at the bottom of all the trouble; it was he who had caused Rapok to become an outlaw, to lose Fraga, to seek death. He fought only to find his enemy. And at last found him.

From the beginning Sato had singled out a single victim. The fawn was the plumpest of the lot. But it was sticking close to a large doe. At the first sign of attack the doe had shoved her charge up against a large tree trunk and stood guard in front of it. Sato had tried to reach it several times. But something always intervened. Now he was free to get his victim.

Sato leaped forward until he stood only a few feet from the two. The doe faced him with unflinching courage. He saw what was in her eyes. She was going to defend her young with her life, if necessary. That could be arranged, Sato thought, as he moved swiftly in to the kill. A feint for the fawn and the doe would move, then a single leap at the red throat and the fawn would be unprotected.

Fraga watched the lean shape and moved with it. The wolf would have to get past her first. She braced herself for the onslaught though the odds were against her. If only, she thought, Rapok were there. Strange that Rapok should come to mind . . .

Suddenly something sprang into focus. She turned her eyes away from Sato and looked at the mirage . . . no! It wasn't a phantasm. *It was Rapok!* And Sato whirled at what he saw in her eyes and faced his enemy. This time, he knew, it was to be to the

death! But whose would it be?

RAPOK was tired. Now he was faced with his greatest battle. If only he had a last reserve of strength. He knew how uneven the fight would be. His life's blood was being drained from him. There had to be enough left for one final blow . . . His muscles gathered for the supreme effort. Like a great red catapult, Rapok charged!

Sato leaped aside at the last instant, and as Rapok charged past Sato dove forward. His teeth closed high up on the red hide, almost at the point where the throat swelled away from the wide chest. He realized, however, that he had failed in his first effort and after ripping at the flesh, Sato released his grip. But before he could get away, Rapok lowered his head and slammed the wolf to the ground. Rapok aimed a kick at the wedge-shaped head, but missed as Sato slipped away. The wolf circled his prey waiting and watching for the opening he knew would come. He saw the wounds the buck had suffered and knew they would tell on him. Already the buck was slow to recover. This time it was Sato who charged.

Rapok stood stock-still and waited. He even lifted his head a trifle so that Sato could get a good grip. The shock of their meeting almost knocked Rapok off his feet, but he managed to maintain a balance. Sato had his death grip. His fangs were buried deep in Rapok's throat. And they would stay there until life drained from the buck.

Rapok tasted the salt of his own blood and knew he had suffered a death wound. But he had planned it so. By a tremendous effort of will and strength, and with the wolf still hanging from him, took a single mighty leap and slammed Sato against the very tree against which Fraga had taken refuge.

Sato released his death's grip, numb

from the shock of the blow. It was the way Rapok had planned it. The head of the buck came up . . . like a plummeting stone it came down. It seemed as if each furry prong found a resting spot in the lean grey shape.

Rapok tried to shake himself loose. The effort was too much for him. His legs folded under him and he sank to the bloodstained snow, beside the dead body of his enemy. He felt something touch his face. He looked up and saw it was the fawn who had come close and was licking at his face as if it was trying in the only way it knew to help him. At the fawn's side stood Fraga. In her eyes was something Rapok had always wanted to see. He saw it for the first time then. It was a love stronger than death. He saw it then for the first time, just as death closed his eyes . . .

THE youngest of the Ti-Titans sighed softly. He looked away from the now-clouded ball and said:

"A magnificent death . . ."

Moab smiled in his beard. He liked Jike. Something of the younger Ti-Titan's ways reminded Moab of his own youth.

"Do not feel badly, Jike. The stag did not die. I was but projecting the pattern of its life in the future. But since we are the ones who control that pattern, we are the ones who can change it. Surely a death such as that is needless for one so brave. Are we agreed?"

The heads nodded slowly in affirmation. Moab's smile grew more broad. He knew Jike had still more questions to ask. Nor was he wrong.

"Moab," Jike began. "You are the all-wise. Yet there were things I did not understand. Time went by. It was the time of bloom when it began and when it ended the snow lay deep on the ground. But what of those spherical disks up above this planet?"

Surely they did not wait that long . . . ?”

Moab answered gently:

“Time is a thing relative to space and dimension. For us there is no time, for we were in the beginning and we will be at the end. We *are* the beginning and the end. More, we are what makes both, for we were entrusted with just those duties. For we are the judge, jury and executioners.

“I simply made time move for Rapok and the others. For those waiting above, time stood still. A second passed for them, but for those below a whole lifetime was done. But now it is time for the judgment . . .”

The heads bobbed about the table. Moab turned to the one next to him on his right. The Ti-Titan answered:

“Bravery, even if done by an idiot, is well. In this case it was done by an animal, selflessly, despite an inevitable death. A changed pattern, I say . . .”

The heads bobbed again until Moab's eyes found those of Jike.

“The law is for unanimity,” Jike said. “A single dissent will return their position to the ordained pattern. We have seen but one side of the pattern. Let us look at the other.”

“He speaks wisdom,” Moab said. “Very well . . .”

Once more his fragile hand gestured across the ball, and once more the clouds parted. They peered closely and saw the flight deck of an immense ship. A man was pacing back and forth before an immense, though narrow platform. They heard words . . .

“**BY ALL** the devils of Gamir!” Horib Ven said fiercely. He swished his flaming-gold coat to one side. “I will rent this whole planet to bits. I will make a flaming pyre for every human

being on it! I will do to this what was done to mine! But first I must scout the country . . .”

“Sire!” a voice spoke almost at Horib Ven's side.

The High Commandant of the Grand Fleet of Gomat turned abruptly and saw it was a messenger. The man was standing at attention, his tightly-drawn uniform without a wrinkle in its whole length.

“Yes?” Horib Ven snapped.

The messenger's eyes stared straight ahead, nor were they on those of his Commander, but directed at a point on the blank tele-screen.

“Captain Hassa sends his compliments and wishes to know what the High Commandant's orders are.”

Horib Ven wrinkled his brow. He knew they were poised motionless, a hundred miles above the glowing sphere below. Like the tail of a comet the Grand fleet stretched for miles across the heavens. He knew that through sheer surprise he could undoubtedly gain a great advantage. But he wanted a complete victory, guaranteed.

“My compliments to Captain Hassa. Have him send a squadron of disk scouts to reconnoiter the ground. I'll want those scouts equipped to bring back a complete visual report. That will be all.”

The messenger saluted, did an about-face and trotted down the length of the flight deck. Horib Ven smacked his thin lips loudly, his eyes bleak in thought. They could not stay up here forever. The journey had been long and hazardous. Passing through the orbit of another planet in this Universe they had been set upon by warships of that planet. They had barely escaped and only because their armament had been superior. Earth was their goal simply because it had the same atmosphere as the planet they had quitted.

The High Commandant stepped to the tele-screen and flicked the on-switch. Instantly the glass face came to life. As though they were ten feet away, the jagged crests of a mountain chain appeared in view. They came closer, closer until the forest depths appeared. There was a small animal in a glade. Another came sneaking toward it. Then just as the small one turned and saw its enemy another animal appeared on the scene. Horib Ven mouthed an expletive and twisted at a knob.

"Animals. What have we to do with them? Where are the cities? Aah!" he had seen the scouting expedition swim into view. They floated down, down until they became motionless at about a ten thousand foot level.

The scene had changed. There was a great stretch of water below, now. There was a town at the edge of the water. Suddenly Horib Ven spoke:

"Captain Hassa. Take your ships down about five hundred feet. However I want speed. Your cameras will record what we want. If there is opposition blast them . . ."

Immediately the disks became streaks of silver light. In the twinkling of an eye they splashed across the screen and were gone. Horib Ven flicked the tele-screen off and strode to his quarters. Very soon Captain Hassa would be there.

"Well, Captain," the high commandant said. "What have you found?"

Hassa, tall man, whose face seemed carved from stone and whose bearing showed the lifetime training of a soldier, found a chair and dragged it to the side of the desk at which his superior sat. He took out the case of tele-photos his scouts had gotten and handed them across to Horib Ven.

"The usual speculation as to what my ships were. There were a couple of

men," Hassa said, "who had an idea about them that was close to the truth. But on the whole people only imagined they saw them. This town below is but a small town. The peoples of this country have knowledge of airships. Matter of fact, they are experimenting with super-sonic vehicles. Only in the experimental stage. I think we can attack safely. There isn't anything in the way of opposition . . ."

"H'm!" Horib Ven's voice held a note of speculation. "It appears a large continent. And unlike ours, divided into numerous nations. I don't like that."

"The better for conquest," Hassa said. "They have an inkling of atomic warfare, but it is rudimentary. Our conquest will be quick and ruthless."

"Very well," Horib Ven said. "Are the super-ray ships in readiness?"

"Yes. It will truly be a devastating blow. Not a single creature can remain alive. Not a single human. Death will be quick. I await your orders, Most High . . ."

"Then strike, Captain. Go . . ."

MOAB'S eyes were oddly bright and commanding as they looked closely into those of the younger man. There was a question which had need of but one answer.

"Yes," Jike said slowly. "The great wisdom of Duis Moab now is like an illuminated page, more wonderful as one sees more of it. I say let them live. Let the pattern change."

Moab nodded as if satisfied and turned his eyes to the balance of the circle. There were no dissents. They had all agreed.

"Very well," Moab said. "Let the pattern change."

THE silvery scout disks plunged down, straightened, and like arrows

of light sped toward the town not far off. In a matter of seconds they would begin the battle of death. From their jet exhausts would flow an invisible stream of death-dealing gas. This gas would settle over the countryside. In a matter of minutes there would not be a single live creature. For the humans, Horib Ven was saving other and more terrible deaths.

But they hadn't progressed more than a mile when suddenly one of them stopped, as though it had run up against a stone wall. Then before the horrified and wondering eyes of the pilots of the rest, it simply disintegrated into tiny bits of metal. They were too far off to see, but those bits of metal looked very much like pieces of slag from a smelting furnace.

As one, the rest flashed upward to safety. And messages streamed across the void to the mother ships above. Captain Hassa, standing by the side of Horib Ven, turned a wondering eye to

his commander.

"It simply disintegrated," he said in a low voice. "But, but . . ."

Horib Ven nodded, his lips tightened until they looked bloodless.

"Yes," he said. "It simply disintegrated. There was no flash of light, no sound. Nothing. No direction from which we could compute the weapon. Nothing. We have lost, Hassa. They have weapons against which we would have no chance. Do you understand?"

The other shook his head in agreement. Yet he had hoped for another answer. Still as a fighting man he knew the odds. They were altogether in the enemy's favor.

"Well, then," he said, "what now?"

"Nothing except another search. This is but a single Universe. There are others," Horib Ven said. "We will find one."

". . . but for a stag and a doe a planet would have died," Moab said . . .

STEEL—

By The Mile!

By Carter T. Wainwright

IN MODERN industry it is a fundamental axiom that the more continuous a process is, the cheaper it will be and the more efficient. This applies to almost every manufacturing industry. In the chemical industries where this is the most common, efficiency is very high. In fact in industry in general, the study of materials handling has assumed an important new role.

Consider for a moment, the world's most important single industry—the manufacture of iron and steel. At present, to a certain extent, this industry is continuous. For example, the operation of a blast furnace is a steady ceaseless affair that goes on day and night, ceasing only for the occasional cleaning and repair of the furnace. The out-

put of the blast furnace is usually fed to a series of water-cooled molds, in the form of miniature railway cars, which form the "pigs" of well known "pig-iron." These pigs are then used in foundries, or are fed to steel-making furnaces.

In the manufacture of steel, however, the process has been far from continuous. Steel making is a matter of cooking iron in an open hearth furnace, or a Bessemer converter, until the iron has taken on the correct proportions of carbon and other elements. Now the bottleneck of the operation, is the handling of the resultant steel. The molten steel is poured into huge molds or billets. When it has solidified, the billet is fed to a rolling machine which reduces it to suitable dimensions.

Eventually the resultant steel reaches long continuous rolling mills where it is turned into beams, sheet steel, or whatever form is desired.

Obviously this is a discontinuous operation. The huge billets of hot steel must be kept warmed in huge soaking pits, they must be banded by gigantic cranes and in general they form a very inconvenient way of handling metal. Now however, a new invention has popped up. It seems that steel men, dissatisfied with this technique, have long looked for a way to take the output of the Bessemer converters and the open-hearth furnaces, and feed it to the rolling mills more directly. The method devised now relies on pouring the molten steel directly from the furnace to a cooling chamber or mold. This cooling chamber is a tower some ninety feet high. As the molten steel pours down it, it is automatically molded into a continuous billet of around 30 square inches in cross-section. This convenient-sized billet appears continuously and may be sliced up into any convenient lengths as it appears at the bottom of the tower. The secret of the operation lies in the development of quick-cooling surfaces which enable the metal to solidify rapidly. As yet the process is still experimental and it is not assured that it will work on a grand scale. But in the pilot plant stages, and in the experimental plant that has already been constructed, it appears to work more than satisfactorily. What will this mean? It means that the price of steel will decrease considerably since so much of the cost of manufacturing lies in the handling of billets, plus the vast cost of the gigantic equipment necessary to deal with them. The continuous casting process eliminates this tedious and costly affair.

Other phases of steel manufacture too have been concerned with continuous processes.

Everyone is familiar with a rolling mill. A rolling mill is a series of gigantic rolls which take the huge steel billets and squeeze them down into anything from four-inch armor plate to ten-thousandth inch tin-plate, by passing the billets through successively smaller rolls. For a long time this too was a difficult disjointed operation.

The individual billets of steel were squeezed down through the successively smaller rolls, the whole operation being watched carefully, frequently stopped for checking, and supervised closely at all times. Now the operation is entirely automatic. Monstrous electric motors of tens of thousands of horsepower turn the rolls. These motors are controlled from a central station. Their speed and temperature are carefully regulated. All the while the sheet steel is passing through the rolls, its thickness is automatically checked by an ingenious x-ray gauge. The minute the gauge shows that the thickness is not quite correct, the roll

tension is changed to correct it. Automatic machinery controls the tension of the sheet steel.

Huge steel billets go in one end of the rolling mill. Out of the other end emerges sheet steel of the desired thickness, be it for tin cans or automobile bodies.

The whole trend in the steel industry can readily be seen. It is keeping with all other industry toward greater mechanization. Eventually the stage will be reached where human interference will be at a minimum. Just as the radio industry has been developing the automatic manufacturing machine, so is the steel industry doing much the same.

The ever-increasing use of automatic machinery is the answer to maintaining the industrial greatness of the United States. Furthermore, it is the greatest contributor to the lowering of costs and the consequent decrease of prices to the consumer.

Coal mining, another of the truly great and necessary industries of a country, is being mechanized too, as is easily discernible from the daily newspapers. What is less commonly known, is the fact that scientists are trying to get away from mining coal entirely! The theory involved is that it's a lot simpler to burn coal right at the mine than to dig it up, transport it, and then burn it in a home or a power house. The experimental methods used involve setting a part of the mine on fire, under controlled conditions of course. Then air pumps force air into the burning strata of coal. This acts like a natural retort. Unburned coal gas is forced from the mine and piped directly to the consumer after being scrubbed in huge cleaning towers where the natural oils and valuable tars are extracted.

Such a method of extracting the energy of coal promises us the use of hitherto useless coal beds. Of course the United States has no monopoly on this sort of thing. In Germany and Russia, such mines and such techniques have been used for some time. We are gradually learning how badly our natural resources have been depleted. It is necessary therefore for us to do something about it. Our answer is to use the newest of methods—and we are—with success.

Until atomic energy is harnessed on a grand scale for the generation of electric power we shall have to continue to rely on coal and water power. It is strictly necessary then that we do this in the most efficient manner possible. Using the coal right at the mine is the most efficient way. And because we can build steel pipelines thousands of miles long, distribution is no longer a problem. It takes a lot less energy to pump a thousand cubic feet of gas a hundred miles than it does to haul a train of the equivalent amount of coal that distance!

THE END

NEXT MONTH "M'BONG—AH"

What Does It Mean? Don't Miss the Answer—February Issue



THE FLEA CIRCUS

By August Meissner

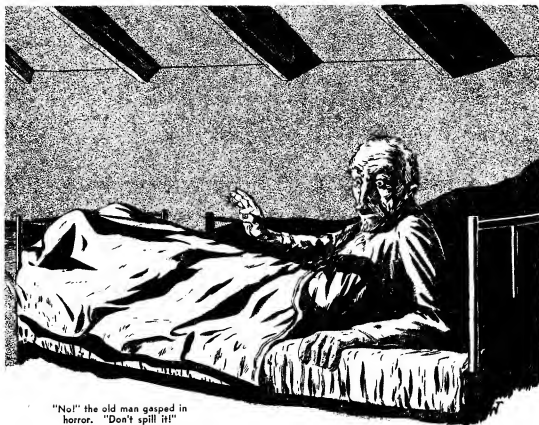
When the atom bombs fell, they caused a mutation in a few fleas—not such an important thing, you might say, but . . .

CHERKHO, YOU are my best friend. Promise that you will take care of them for me.”

Ladslo Cherkho looked down at the dying man and grinned crookedly. All these years of waiting for the old wretch to die. Well, here it was, the reality.

Oh, the sublime test! The Gods knew divine jests. But only mortals paid for them.

Cherkho turned from the bed and walked across the mean little room to the weather-beaten chest standing across an angle of a wall. There was a



"No!" the old man gasped in horror. "Don't spill it!"

small box on the stained top. Cherkho lifted the box with fingers that somehow felt revulsion. He turned and brought the box back to the bedside of the dying man.

"They are in here?" he asked.

"Yes," the old man replied. "Ten of them. Fleas, only fleas. But cherish them as you would your own life, for . . . for . . ." there was a dry, rasping sound. The old man half-rose from the dirty sheet that covered him. A yellow slime ran from the dry, bloodless lips. His eyes stared wildly at Cherkho, then turned upward. He fell back against the sheet. The old man was dead.

Cherkho looked at him for an instant, spat full into the dead face, took out a handkerchief, wiped the face free of

spittle, walked to the phone near the wall and called the police.

* * *

"Your name?" the inspector asked.

"Ladslo Cherkho."

"Occupation?"

"I am a trainer of fleas."

"*A trainer of fleas!*" the inspector voiced his amazement. "What an unusual occupation. H'm. And this," he looked into the small black book in which he kept the accounts of his calls, "this Morscha. He owned a flea circus?"

"Yes, sir."

The inspector inserted a finger into his nose, withdrew it, looked at the finger with abstract interest, then brought his gaze back to Cherkho. Peculiar chap, this flea trainer, he thought.

If the police surgeon hadn't said that death was due to natural causes, he'd run the insolent beggar in. It was like pulling teeth, to get an answer from the man.

"I've never met a flea trainer," the inspector said. "Tell me how you and Morscha met."

"If the inspector will be good enough to excuse me," Cherkho said. "I have been in attendance on the dead man for the last forty-eight hours . . . without sleep . . ."

The inspector understood. *He* was being dismissed.

Cherkho watched the door close on the thick, squat shape of the inspector, kept looking at the door for a few seconds, then released his breath in a long sigh. Well, that was over. Now he could look at his—he grunted at the thought—inheritance. He dug the small box—it was a pill box—from his pocket and held it close to the light as he pushed the lid open. A fine mesh gauze covered the box. Below that mesh ten minute bits of life lay or moved or made love, or perhaps died. He couldn't see them. But he knew they were there. He had seen them!

The telephone suddenly jangled its loud summons. Cherkho fell immobile on the bed. Once and once more the sound tortured the silent room. The only thing that moved was a vein high on Cherkho's temple. It throbbed with a steady, insistent beat. Slowly, the man on the bed rose and walked to the phone and lifted the receiver from the wall.

"Hello," said the metallic-sounding voice at the other end. "Hello."

"Yes," Cherkho said.

"Let me speak to Ladslo . . ."

"Speaking."

"Well . . ."

"The old man is dead."

"Ah," the voice at the other end said

in satisfying tones. "So . . . And the fleas?"

"They are mine."

"Good. Meet me at the cafe in an hour."

IT BORE a grand title, The Cafe of the Emperor's Cook, but it was only a mean little coffee shop in the lowest section of Budapest. Cherkho opened the door and stood on the threshold for an instant. He spotted the man he had come to see, almost instantly. Hladyo had made certain that his seat was not too conspicuous. Cherkho grinned crookedly as he approached the other.

"So the old man is dead," Hladyo said by way of greeting.

"Are we to say a requiem for him?" Cherkho asked ironically.

Hladyo shrugged thin, high shoulders.

"I am cold and tired," Cherkho said. "Order me some wine and coffee."

The tall, thin man with the cadaver's face waited until Cherkho finished the last of the coffee before he spoke again.

"I like you, Cherkho. You have the direct approach—money. All else is false. So to business. You have the fleas?"

"Fleas, fleas," Cherkho said in a manner almost dream-like. "So much of fleas. Ten years I put in, bitter years. Come now, ask me what I was doing?"

"I know what you were . . ."

Cherkho continued as if his question didn't ask for an answer:

"I waited for a man to die, that's what I was doing. And do you know why I waited for this man to die?"

Hladyo was silent.

"I'll tell you why. Because I thought I was to inherit his wealth, that's why. You may say that there is nothing unusual in a man waiting for another to die so that he will become

rich. Happens every day." He pulled a crumpled pack of Athenos from his jacket pocket lit one of the fragrant cigarettes, exhaling the smoke windily, and all the while looking at the other man with somber, intent gaze. "I tell you, Hladyo, I would have killed that man, if I could have gotten away with it."

Hladyo tapped the table top with long, bony fingers. He jerked his head up and down nervously, displaying patches of badly-shaved neckline. The fingers came up to straighten his tie, moved to bring his shirt collar to a more comfortable position on the vulture's neck, fell away to tap the table once more, and all the while he watched Cherkho from sunken eyes, red-rimmed and dead-looking.

Cherkho smiled, a gold bridge gleaming dully in the shallow light. It wasn't at anything he had said. Rather, it was a something mechanical, like his slow drags at the cigarette. He had completely forgotten the other man. His tale needed no listener. Only his mind that had to be reminded again and again of the ten years.

"It's a long time to wait—ten years. But I was a young man when it began," Cherkho continued in his monotone. "Right before the war. Yes, the old man was old even then. But I was young. Yes, damn it! Young and gay. Full of life and the desire to live. But the war came. You remember. The men marching off, the women already scheming how to make time pass more quickly. The dead, damned past! Well . . .

"He was Professor Morscha of the Royal Hungarian Academy in those days. Morscha the world famous biochemist. And I was his bright and shining light, his favorite pupil. The nights we spent scheming to make the world a better, more wonderful place to live

in. And the days spent in research. But the war came to end all that. Morscha hated war. All wars. He was working for the peace. Something twisted, wrenched at his mind in those first days. And the brilliant scientist became an old fool.

"So the old and the young ran away from the terror. Away from the bombs and destruction. We became wanderers, tinkers, lending our hands to whatever came their way. And in the end, we joined a carnival. We were unrecognizable. Who would have thought the ragged old man, stinking of body and clothes, and the young one, horny-palmed, thick-shouldered and slightly vacant-eyed from the habits of two years of evading the military, were scientists. The war ended that year. It was a short war. Almost overnight the great powers realized the terrible destruction they had let loose would destroy the world. So they ended that war. And sowed the seeds of another.

"But I digress."

CHERKHO lit another cigarette and motioned for the waiter to bring fresh coffee and wine. Hladyo paid for the drinks when they came. But he, himself, had nothing. Only a cigarette from the pack of Athenos.

"The war had ended," Cherkho resumed. "Yet we stayed with the carnival. That was strange, wasn't it? We were free to go back and resume where we had left off. But as I said in the beginning, something had wrenched Morscha's mind from its stability. I remember the night I discovered that.

"We had come to a village which had been bombed three days before. Not a house, not a single dwelling had been left intact. The streets were rubble-strewn and stinking with the torn flesh of the corpses that no one had bothered

to collect and burn. We two were the only things alive in that world of the dead. No, I won't say just we two. There were others, but they weren't human things.

"There were strange odors on the air, and not alone the odors of death. There were odors, well, like one finds in the laboratory. Morscha sniffed the air like a hound smelling meat.

"And like a dog, he prowled the streets of dead. I followed. There was nothing else to do. Besides, once in a while food was to be found among the ruins. I was always hungry in those days. Suddenly I heard him call.

"'Ladslo! Come here!'

"I ran over, thinking he had found food. But he was bent over a man, or rather, the remains of a man. It was an almost dismembered corpse he kneeled beside. About the only thing recognizable was the torso.

"'Look!' he exclaimed in an excited tone.

"I looked but saw nothing unusual about the cadaver.

"'The skin, Ladslo,' he said sticking his finger close to the rotting flesh.

"The cadaver's skin, I noticed, was a pale, gleaming yellow. I recognized the action of radio-activity, the result of atom bombing. Nothing unusual. I said as much.

"'You idiot! Can't you see those fleas crawling about?'

"'So?' I asked.

"He looked up at me. There was a queer, hidden look there in his eyes. Without saying anything more, he took out a pill box he always carried in his pocket and scraped the fleas from the torso into the box. Then he said something strange. It still puzzles me. He said, "'And little fleas have littler fleas and so ad infinitum.'

"Two days later we found the carnival.

"I was strong, healthy, used to labor. They hired me as a roustabout. But Morscha was a sly old bird. He said he had a flea circus. The owner, a rat-ty looking man in a faded green suit, wanted to see the flea circus. But Morscha stalled him off, saying he had to teach the fleas a new routine. They gave us quarters in one of the wagons that night.

"The old man waited until the two others were asleep, then took the kerosene lamp to our corner after shading it so that the light could not be seen from the other's corner. He took out the little box and slipped the cover part way out.

"'Ladslo,' he said. 'These little beasts will make our fortune one of these days. But I must have time to work with them.'

"'What are you going to do?' I asked.

"'First, train them. I once saw a flea circus in Budapest. Clever the way the man had those fleas trained. He showed me how. Of course he didn't have fleas like these. But I'll manage.'

"All that night he worked with the little beggars. And by morning he had done what he had set out to do. I noticed one thing, though. He never touched them with his bare hands.

"THE owner was delighted. A flea circus is a sure-fire attraction at a carnival. It draws all ages. And a smart operator will place a money-making booth alongside. The owner of this carnival was a shrewd proposition. The circus was an instant success.

"In fact, we became such a draw that Morscha demanded a separate wagon for the two of us, and got it. We became famous in all the provinces of Hungary. There is scarcely a town in all the country that hasn't seen and remembered the circus of Marscha.

"The years went by and we prospered. That is Morscha prospered. The only money I had was the beggarly pittance the old man gave me. After the first week, he installed me as his assistant. I used to stand in front of our booth and spiel off the empty words Morscha had made up to draw the people inside. But I stayed on because of a promise the old man had made me. That in the end, with his passing, I would inherit all he owned.

"At first the carnival owner paid Morscha a salary. But as the success of the circus grew, Morscha demanded and got, a share of the profits. I knew he had money. That was why I stayed on. There would be enough for me, more than enough. And Morscha was already an old man. Death could not be too far off.

"One day I discovered that the old man had renewed his interest in science. We had played a fairly large town. He had gone off during the afternoon and when he returned, he had several large packages with him. When he took the papers off I saw that they contained various instruments, retorts and a crucible. From that day on, I ran the flea circus. He busied himself in the wagon. But it was no longer like the old days at the university. He worked alone on his project.

"Then it was not long before the wagon simply would not hold the two of us and the various equipment, animals he had bought, and other impedimenta. I came to have a wagon of my own.

"That was last year. For the first time in ten years I knew privacy, the knowledge of a woman again, the heady taste of wine in abundance. And all from fleas.

"I would see him every day. And every day he would assure me that I would inherit all his wealth. I noticed

that he was becoming doddering, senile. More and more age was becoming a burden death would soon throw off. I gloated when I heard his voice. It was becoming weak and now and then he forgot what he had started to say and rambled on about the world, the 'damned world,' as he called it.

"I forget the exact month, but it was sometime in spring, that he called me into his wagon one day. It had been so long since I had seen a laboratory that I gawked like a yokel when I saw the elaborate equipment. He called me to his side.

"'Look,' he said. He held an eight ounce vial of some colorless liquid in his hand.

"'What is it?' I asked.

"'The elixir of life and death,' he replied.

"I knew then he had lost his senses. A warm glow suffused my being. It couldn't be too long, I thought. Perhaps sooner than I had dared hope. I forgot the ten years gone by.

"He kept looking at the colorless stuff.

"I moved around, looking with curiosity at some of the cultures he had under glass. There was one, a slime, bright yellow in color, like mustard. Another, pale blue, held rust-colored spots scattered through it. Still another was a pale-grey mucuous. Why that culture made me shudder, I don't know, but shudder I did.

"'I am done, Ladslo,' the old man's voice called me to his side. 'Five years I worked at this. Now it is done. Only one thing I must do. Go back to Budapest.'

"Five years! I stared at him in amazement. Had it been that long? It was incredible, the swiftness of time's passing. A great fear suddenly possessed me. That the old man might outlive me."

THE monotone came to a halt. Cherkho looked at his companion. Yet, though he looked straight at the other man, he did not see him. If he had he would have seen that Hladyo was asleep. Cherkho was lost in the tale he was telling. Telling to himself. He went on:

"'Why?' I asked.

"'So that the world will know what I have done,' he said.

"'Master,' I said, addressing him as I had done in the old days at the university. 'What is this thing you have done?'

"'He looked at me and I saw that his eyes were dazed, held depths of an insane rage. His voice rose in a shriek.

"'They want war, do they? Well then I shall give them war! A far more terrible war than any they've ever dreamed of!'

"'He shivered violently as with cold. The liquid in the vial moved restlessly. Suddenly, he became aware that he was still holding it. His tremulous fingers laid it down in its cradle. When he turned to me I saw that the mad look had gone from his eyes.

"'I cannot tell you all,' he said. 'But you remember the fleas I found. From the generations which followed those I have made a great discovery. Here in this little box,' he lifted one of his pill boxes and showed it to me, 'are ten fleas. They can cause the most terrible death the world has ever known. *Because they live on death!* Nothing can destroy them. Death comes to them only when it is time for them to die. Otherwise . . .'

"'I waited for him to finish, but instead he said, 'I talk too much. The privilege of the old. But don't worry, Cherkho. Soon I'll die. Then you will have a greater wealth than even you had hoped for.'

"So he knew. Well, it didn't seem

to make much difference from the way he talked. I wondered how much he had. All these years. He hadn't spent any of it except for the equipment he had there. And his mention of a greater wealth . . .

"'I'll leave tonight,' he said, his voice an irate croak. 'I may be gone for a few months. There are things only Budapest can give me. At any rate, I shall let you know when to come up.'

"I saw him take a hypodermic needle and dip it into the solution as I went out.

"So that was it. The old boy was taking dope. And with that thought, I felt the first stirrings of a new fear. Dope! That took money. My money! I tried to reassure myself, as I walked to my wagon. Sonya, one of the carnival girls, was waiting for me. And though she tried all the tricks of love on me, the same ones which had never failed her before, this night they failed. My inattention led to a battle at the end of which I threw her bodily from the wagon.

"In the morning, I found that the old man had left.

"The months went by. But now I could no longer enjoy anything. The thought of the old man's spending my money on dope was a never-to-be-forgotten thought. It held precedence over everything. Even love. I took to drink. When I was drunk, I stopped thinking. And I drank more and more, so that in the end, I was constantly immersed in liquor.

"Carlo, the carnival owner, noticed my drunkenness. Not that I tried to hide it. But when business began to fall off at the flea circus, his attention was brought to me. I stayed away from my booth, more and more. One day we got into an argument. When we were done, I was no longer connected with the carnival.

"I didn't care. I packed my belong-

ings, took a last leave of Sonya and boarded the first train for Budapest.

"BUT I had forgotten one thing.

Morscha never gave me his address. It took three weeks to find him. They were the most terrible weeks I had ever known. Think of it, the torture of going from place to place, from acquaintance and friend, most of whom I hadn't seen in ten years, and only to find that none of them had either seen or heard of him since we left. And in the end, I came to the place I should have gone at the very beginning, one of those shops that specialize in scientific sundries. Morscha had been there. They had his address.

"That was three days ago, Hladyo."

Cherkho looked at his companion and for the first time saw that the other was asleep.

"Hladyo!"

The vulture-face moved, became alive; the eyes opened sleepily and centered their still sleep-befogged glance on Cherkho.

"I-I," the other stuttered, "I must have dozed off. Forgive me, my friend. You were saying . . .?"

"That three days ago I found my old friend, Morscha. In an old run-down hotel. He was sick, delirious. I damned him. Cursed him. But what was the use of cursing one who can't answer back? I would have left him. But already I saw that he was sick to death. And in his delirium he kept mumbling of the *wealth* that was his; and that would soon be mine.

"I ransacked that room from top to bottom. Everything. But the old boy had either hid the dough somewhere else or had it in a place that defied my search. I had to stay to nurse him back to health. Yesterday, it was early in the afternoon, sanity returned to him. He saw me, and guessed that I had nursed

him. His gratitude was boundless. Over and over, he told me of how great would be my inheritance. For he knew that death was not far off for him.

"Those damned fleas! Those devil-damned fleas. They were to be my inheritance."

"Look!" the old buzzard said, as he stripped his underwear from his scrawny body.

"I looked and got sick to my stomach. His body was a raw, red mass of welts and pus-filled pimples. He saw the expression of disgust on my face and laughed aloud.

"Get me the little box from the dresser top," he said.

"I did as he told me. He began to scrape at his body, counting aloud as he did so. I knew then that he had gone out of his mind. Somewhere in the back of my mind, I knew he had the fleas with him. How I knew this, or *why* it had come to my mind, I didn't know. I was right. Ten, he counted before he closed the lid of the box. Then he looked at me, his eyes shiny with a strange look, and said:

"My needle and that tube of colorless liquid; you will find them in one of the . . ."

"He stopped suddenly. He saw my expression.

"Cherkho! What's wrong?' he asked. I saw that his body was trembling as with ague.

"I spilled the liquid," I said. It was true. I had found the unstoppered tube and in my hurry to see what else lay in that drawer, I spilled its contents. 'But don't worry,' I said. 'Tell me where to go. I'll have it refilled.'

"He began to laugh. He laughed for a long time, great, belly-shaking laughs. The bed shook to the sound of his laughter. At last he stopped and wiping his eyes, said:

"So you'll get me more! Where,

Cherkho, where? No there's no more to be gotten of that stuff, the stuff that will . . . H'm. Too late,' he sort of mumbled, as if to himself. 'What day is this?' he asked.

"I told him, wondering what difference it made.

"'Three days,' he said softly. 'Ah well. Listen Cherkho,' he said in that same suddenly gentle voice. 'Listen carefully. Those fleas I have given you . . . ' he stopped and horror filled his eyes. 'The other fleas!' he said in a hoarse voice. 'Where are they?'

"'I willed them to Carlo,' I said.

"**H**E CLOSED his eyes for an instant. When he opened them I saw he had come to some sort of decision.

"'Listen carefully, Cherkho,' he said. 'Maybe . . . I'm not sure any longer. But I may have done wrong. The fleas . . . the fleas . . .'

"His body was suddenly shaken by tremors which increased until the old guy was like a mass of jelly. Before I could do anything about it he became unconscious.

"I left him just the way he was and went out. I felt the need of a drink. The rest you know."

Hladyo yawned, belched loudly, then said:

"You met me, eh? Yes, you met me and I told you how to make money, didn't I?"

Ladslo Cherkho grinned crookedly. "Yes. Who would have thought that a flea circus could be worth so much money?" Cherkho asked.

"So the old man *has* left you wealth. Don't think I'm a fool," Hladyo said. "I saw that carnival in a little town near the Roumanian border. I never forget a face. And when I saw you here I remembered where I'd seen you. Do you know why I remembered?" He

didn't wait for an answer. "Because Morscha had the most amazing flea act I'd ever seen. For one thing, they weren't fleas to begin with. I don't know what they are. But they're not fleas."

Cherkho's eyes went wide. Hladyo was right. Fleas were wingless insects having an amazing power to leap in their three sets of legs. But Morscha's had only one set of legs and didn't jump around at all.

"No," Hladyo said. "They're not fleas. But they can do the damndest things. Did you know they can communicate with each other? I'll swear it! They talk to each other. Those marching maneuvers I've seen them do. Don't you remember what Morscha said in his spiel. They're the only fleas which won't bite. And how the people would crowd around to let him put them on their arms. 'March!' he'd say. And the little beggars would march up and down the lengths of the people's arms. 'Along the line of veins!' Morscha would command. Like little soldiers, they'd follow the command. 'Down each finger!' They'd never fail. And never a bite out of them. It was something to see."

Cherkho withdrew the pill box from his pocket while Hladyo was talking.

"Oh, I'm no fool," Hladyo continued. "I'll make my money back. And more. Ah!" he had seen the box.

Cherkho slipped the lid back. Their heads bent low over the gauze-covered box.

"Pull off the gauze," Hladyo said. "I want to see them."

There were ten of them, just as Morscha counted.

They peered intently at them and puzzled frowns creased their foreheads.

"They seem larger, different than those I've seen," Cherkho mused.

"Are you sure they're the same?"

Hladyo asked.

"Oh, yes," Cherkho said. "But now that I think of it, Morscha got others. I mean these are the original ten. And these are the ones we worked with. Only at the end . . . no . . . I don't know. I never looked too closely at them. But now . . . look, Hladyo! They seem like, well, if I didn't think it was silly, I'd say they looked like miniature humans."

THEY were intent on the box and did not see a waiter coming toward their table. The cafe had become crowded while Cherkho talked. All of the tables held occupants, now. A waiter, struggling under a loaded tray passed close by. Cherkho's leg was thrust around his chair. The waiter didn't notice it and in passing, tripped over it, sending the tray and its contents over the two men.

They jumped up, twisting away from the hot liquids. The table went over, the little box and its contents falling to the floor. In the excitement that followed neither of them thought of the fleas. And when they remembered, it was too late. They scrambled around on their hands and knees. But in the sawdust and filth of what was on the floor it was like searching for a needle in a haystack. Cherkho didn't feel the bite. He scratched at his leg in irritation but didn't give thought to it.

Hladyo stood up, his face twisted in disgust.

"Bah! It's no use. They're gone. Damned clumsy man. I tell you," he continued as Cherkho continued to scabble about vainly on hands and knees, "it's no use. They're gone."

Cherkho stood up. He still scratched at the irritating spot under his trousers.

"Yes," he said in resigned tones. "You're right. They're gone. My

wonderful legacy." He began to laugh, softly at first, then louder and louder until every voice was stilled and every ear turned in his direction. Slowly Hladyo backed away from the laughing man. He felt something prick his skin. He looked down and saw what looked like a flea on his skin. Then it was gone. So they did bite, he thought. Well, it didn't make any difference now.

* * *

FERENC RICHTER, inspector of police, stared in morbid fascination at the report of the autopsy. It said only that Morscha died of heart failure. Yet Richter wasn't satisfied. There wasn't anything he could lay his finger on and say, here's where the trouble is. But in his innermost soul, he felt there was something fishy about Morscha and that tall sneak, Cherkho.

There was a discreet knock at his door. It opened and the assistant coroner walked in.

"Richter, I just got a phone call from the morgue."

"So?"

"The cadaver. Morscha. It's disintegrating. The flesh is rotting away from the body."

A tiny bell rang in Richter's skull. "The flesh his rotting away.' Where had he heard that exact phrase? He suddenly pounded a fist into a palm. He knew now, what it was that had bothered him. Morscha had owned a flea circus.

Quickly, he brought out his little book and leafed through the pages. There it was, the history of the man, as given by Cherkho. And the name of the town they had come from. Four days ago!

"Ferdy," he asked the assistant, "do you remember that report we got from Rasni. You know that little town where all the people in a carnival died?"

"Yes," Ferdy said. He grew thought-

ful. What was Richter driving at?

"What was in the report of the condition of the bodies?"

"The flesh," Ferdy said slowly, "began to rot from the bodies two hours after death. They were covered with bites and welts, as if numberless insects had been at work on them."

"And Morscha's body?" Richter continued his unrelenting questions.

"The same. What are you driving at?"

"That the old guy had some sickness he gave to the rest of those people at the carnival. Whatever it is, we've got to find it. Who knows . . . Holy Father! That Cherkho! He must have it too."

"Who?"

"Cherko, the flea trainer. Morscha's assistant. He probably has it."

"By the way," Ferdy said. He had become unaccountably pale. "We've had another report out of Rasni. The deaths weren't confined only to the carnival people. The whole town is dying. One by one, people are falling dead at whatever they are doing. And all of them have this same terrible end. Their flesh rots from their bodies."

Richter shuddered. What horrible thing had been let loose by this Morscha. He stood up, shoving his chair to the wall in his haste.

"I'm going out. What's the matter? You got the itch?"

"Something bit me. Must have fleas," Ferdy said. "Some of those cadavers . . ."

"Bite 'em back," Richter counseled as he went out.

RICHTER hurried to the third-rate hotel. It wasn't far from the station and it only took him ten minutes to get there. He ran up the rickety steps, three at a time.

The room was empty. He heard a

sound at the door and turned to see the landlady looking suspiciously at him.

"What are you . . ." she started to say, then recognized him. "Oh. It's you, inspector."

"Yes, it's me. Listen. Was there anything peculiar about either this Morscha or his friend, that you noticed?"

"Why inspector," the woman said indignantly. "Do you think I pry into my tenants . . ."

"Yes!" Richter said sharply. "Out with it."

"Well . . . I did one night. I was passing by. It was before the young man came. The old guy was lying in bed. He was looking at his skin and mumbling to himself. I came close to the door and listened. He was saying, 'Only I know the antidote. Bite. Go ahead, bite. Ha-ha.'

"I brought you with me to show them. On a dog, I'll show them. And if they don't believe me, on a human. A single bite and they die."

"Was that all you heard?"

She nodded.

Richter thought a moment. Whatever it was, was something deadly. Morscha had been a scientist. Therefore there should be some notes. For half an hour he searched. And at last found them. It was a sort of diary. On the last page Richter read:

"The original ten I kept. These did not die. But the ones I bred out through them had a definite life period. The original ten bite, the others apparently do not. They are the more terrible for no one will ever know when they have become inoculated with the terrible virus. Half of Hungary must have been bitten. No one knows, least of all, Cherkho. I do not trust him.

"He has become a mad fool over money. If he had only listened to me and watched me, he would have seen

how important were these things we found, years ago. He has lost his scientific curiosity. A pity. If he had, he would have noticed that the cadavers in that atom-bombed town had not been blown to bits. They had died from other reasons. The little animal-humans. I'm not sure, but I think they came as a result of something in the radioactive end products of the bombs. And only I have the antidote for their bites. In a little vial. Without that . . ."

Richter stopped reading and

scratched at his wrist. Something had bitten him.

Cherkho was right. Some of them were so small they couldn't be seen, nor their bites felt overmuch. The atom bomb would not destroy humanity, but these mutated fleas would. Even in making peace, humans had failed—they made peace through fear, not love; and such emotions are not worthy of survival.

Perhaps nature will have more success with the fleas . . .

THE END

METEOROLOGY VERSUS BIOLOGY

By



A. MORRIS



HOW often have you heard your grandfather or grandmother ask, "Is it going to rain—my joints ache and my rheumatism is acting up?" Or how often have you heard some acquaintance remark, "I'm feeling lousy and lazy—must be spring fever?" And if you were of a scientific turn of mind, you probably said, "Baloney—that's a lot of superstition!"

But a number of prominent doctors who have been studying the relationship between weather and the health of human beings—a new subject, "meteor-biology"—seem to be going back to these old beliefs. They have learned that there is a definite correlation between the weather and one's feelings. And there is an exact scientific reason for it all. It seems that the capillaries which carry the blood throughout the body to the tissues swell or contract, dependent upon the weather, and this affects our feelings. Actually what happens when the capillaries change volume like this, is that the blood is effectively thinned or thickened—and remember how grandmother used to believe in a spring tonic to "thicken the blood?" Evidently she wasn't far wrong.

The blood does actually change its consistency with the weather. This is an observed physiological fact.

All of which helps to show another fact that has bothered students of sociology for a long time. Those countries where the greatest industrial development have taken place, like the United States, Germany, Russia, and England, are located in the colder, more temperate zones. The

activity and energy of their people is actually greater simply because the weather and its frequent changes from hot to cold and back again and its continual daily variation is stimulating and productive of activity. Everyone knows that they prefer to study and work in cold weather more than in hot, and the results of their effort is readily shown.

Similarly the lag in industrial development in countries like Italy and Spain is not only due to the lack of natural resources. More than that, the climate of such countries, including our own South, with hot, moist climates, is much less than those with cold. This doesn't mean that the people are any different. Far from it. It means simply that they are living in an environment less suitable to great activity. The siesta, the slower-moving pace of living, is conducive to relaxation rather than rushing.

While such areas are less developed industrially, they also, in many respects, are healthier—at least in terms of those great killers like tuberculosis and heart trouble. The northern, temperate areas are much more powerful supporters of the very diseases that are native to them, like the two last named.

Contrary to popular belief, sexual maturity is attained in temperate climates at an earlier age than warm ones. Probably the reputation of Latins as lovers is merely due to the greater amount of leisure time that they have. And too, as a rule, the restriction of their other activities helps in this respect.

SHAVERIAN SIDELIGHTS

By



Vincent H. Gaddis



Some interesting notes on the Shaver legend by a noted research authority

HUNDREDS of world-wide traditions agree that man, long ago, emerged from great caves below the surface of the earth after a colossal catastrophe had laid waste the earlier world he had known. Faintly, across the hoary millenniums, we catch a glimpse in these legends of a strange and astonishing yesterday that has vanished forever in remote antiquity. "The cavern," writes Brinton, in his *Myths of the New World*, "dimly lingered in the memories of nations."

During the centuries since enigmatic men have appeared from inexplicable points of origin, performed feats that cannot be explained in terms of our knowledge, and vanished. The Navy Department would like to know what happened to John Andrews who disappeared after he successfully used water as a fuel for motors. And there was Kaspar Hauser who grew up in a realm of darkness, arrived in our world of light with the ability to see stars at midday, and was mysteriously murdered. What was the secret of the baffling box that was buried below a road in Germany by strangers to stop recurring accidents at this spot? From where have these individuals arrived who speak languages unknown to earth?

We are faced with two great problems—first, the nature of an ancient culture that could engrave coins by use of an acid unknown to us today (found at a depth of 114 feet in Illinois), and build ships of a design unknown to recorded history (found under a hill in Peru)—and, second, the bewildering events of today that are occurring behind an iron curtain of conventional theory and current fashions in accepted, dogmatic belief. Perhaps, as Mr. Shaver suggests, there is a connection between these two riddles as amazing as are the data.

Cave Legends

IGNATIUS Donnelly was a strange man who wrote strange books. In his work entitled *Ragnarok: The Age of Fire and Gravel*, written in 1882 and devoted to the conception that the so-called glacial deposits of the earth were actually left by a comet that struck and ravaged our planet, he has collected from earlier writers numerous legends of prehistoric cave life that are as

widespread as they are suggestive. It seems certain that after a period of fiery devastation man came up out of the earth to remake a world.

Of special interest in the light of the great tunnels beneath their land, is the legend of the ancient Peruvians that their ancestors emerged from the primeval cave known as the Pacarin-Tampu, or Lodgings of the Dawn, the entrance to which, in days long ago, was located five leagues distant from Cuzco, and was surrounded by a sacred grove containing temples of great antiquity. And the Toltecs and Aztecs traced their origin back to "the seven sacred caves."

In reference to the Peruvian cave, Balboa, in his *Histoire du Perou*, writes: "From its hallowed recesses the mythical civilizers of Peru, the first of men, emerged, and in it, returning during the time of the flood, the remnants of the race escaped the fury of the great waves." Thus, again, we have a striking confirmation of the Apache legend uncovered by L. Taylor Hansen.

Also of interest is the report given by Bancroft in his *Native Races* (3-90) regarding the legend of Mt. Shasta possessed by the Indians of Northern California. The story states that the Great Spirit made Mt. Shasta first, and the Creator, after making trees, birds and animals, "hollowed out the mountain as a wigwam for himself where he might reside while on earth in the most perfect security and comfort. So the smoke was soon to be seen curling up from the mountain where the Great Spirit and his family lived, and still live, though their hearth-fire is alive no longer, now that the white man is in the land."

Donnelly's comment at this point is interesting. He writes: "Here the superior race seeks shelter in a cave on Mt. Shasta, and their camp-fire is associated with the smoke which once went forth out of the volcano, while an inferior race dwells in the plains at the foot of the mountain."

Bancroft's account continues: All this happened thousands of snows ago, then later came a great storm from the sea which shook the huge lodge (Mt. Shasta) to its base. The Great Spirit sent his daughter to still the wind, but she was blown down the mountain side by the wind where she was found by a family of grizzly bears who walked upright, talked, and carried clubs. Angered,

the Great Spirit punished the bears by making them true animals. Obviously, Donnelly observes, the child of the Great Spirit (the superior race) intermarried with the bears (the inferior race), and from this union came the race of men (the Indians).

Bancroft, in his exhaustive collection of Indian lore, gives us other remarkable legends. The story of the Navajos was that once all nations, including white people, lived together underground in the heart of a mountain near the river San Juan. Their food was meat since all kinds of animals were closed up with them in their cave. After a great flood all the people came up, requiring several days, and then they separated. The whites went toward the rising sun and disappeared. The Navajos also make references to the "Old Men"—a god-like civilized race that named the stars, and add that when all races lived underground they had but one language, but when separation came on the surface of the earth many languages came into existence.

The tribes of the Creeks, Seminoles, Choctaws, Chickasaws and Natchez, once united in a confederacy according to their common traditions, all placed their point of origin and earliest ancestry near an artificial eminence or mound in the Valley of the Big Black River in the Natchez country. This curious mound is still in existence and is located near Jonesville, Louisiana. It consists of an elevation of earth about half a mile square and from fifteen to twenty feet high; from its northeast corner a wall of the same height extends for half a mile to high land. The legend states that in the mound's center was a cave, the home of the Master of Breath, and at this spot they were formed of the earth and given the breath of life at a time when waters covered most of the world.

It is significant that the Choctaws, in their far-western home, remembered this mound, and that the Six Nations of the Northeast had a similar legend which gave their common point of cave origin beside a mountain near the falls of the Oswego River in the state of New York.

There is the legend of the Oraibi that they came up a ladder from a lower world. And in *Frost and Fire* (2-190) we read: "The inhabitants of central Europe and the Teutonic races who came late to England place their mythical heroes underground in caves, in vaults beneath enchanted castles, or in mounds which rise up and open, and show their hurried inhabitants alive and busy about the avocations of earthly men. . . . In Morayshire the hurried race are supposed to be under the sandhills, as they are in some parts of Brittany."

The most ancient of hill tribes in India state that their ancestors came out of a cave in the earth under the leadership of a chief named Tlandrophah, and Donnelly suggests that the cave-temples of India, the oldest temples existing today, are a reminiscence of this long-gone but dimly-remembered cave life.

Ancient America

JUST as widespread as the traditions of a cave life are the legends of an ancient super-race of god-like beings who possessed great powers, but either fell from their high estate of culture, were destroyed in a catastrophe, or abandoned the earth. From time to time various objects are found which are probably relics of this remote era when the sun shone on continents now lost beneath the waves of our seas.

Fray Pedro Simon, in the seventeenth century, told of a discovery made by some miners in Peru who were running an adit into a hill near Callao. Below the hill, long hurried, they found a ship "which had on top of it the great mass of the hill, and did not agree in its make or appearance with our ships." It is of interest to note that Callao is the port city of Lima, which, according to the existing charts, marks the northern junction point of the network of prehistoric tunnels that lie beneath Peru's archaic soil.

James Churchward, in his *Children of Mu*, calls our attention to ancient records, found in both India and China and dating back some 15,000 to 20,000 years, that refer to flying machines. The prose-poem of *Rama and Sita*, written by Valmiki, the Hindu Herodotus, from earlier temple histories found at Aythodia, contains a remarkable description of a flying ship of a rocket type. Other old manuscripts and tablets make similar references.

One states that Rawan, an ancient king, flew over an enemy army in a "celestial car" and dropped "fire" that caused many casualties. Rawan was shot down with a weapon that made thunder and spit fire, and his machine was taken by the Hindu leader Ram Chandra to his capital city of Ajudhia in Northern India. In another record, the *Maha Bharata*, a reference is made to a gift of a flying machine by one king to another.

Churchward refers to one detailed record found in an Indian temple "which is a drawing and instructions for the construction of an airship and her machinery, power and engine. The power is taken from the atmosphere in a very simple inexpensive manner. The engine is somewhat like our present-day turbine in that it works from one chamber to another until finally exhausted. When the engine is once started it never stops until turned off; it will continue on if allowed to do so until its hearings are worn out."

These prehistoric machines were independent of all fuel, and apparently the power was limited only to what the vessel could stand. They were self-propelling since they generated their own power as they flew along, and the ships could keep circling the earth without landing until the machinery was worn out. Flights of to 3000 miles are referred to in the records.

Returning, however, to America, it is to be regretted that discoveries made in the past were simply treated as oddities and never fully investigated. An example is the finding of a pavement and cisterns or shafts of brick seventy feet below the surface near Memphis, Tenn., in Sep-

tember, 1882. A few curious comments, a brief article in *Harper's Magazine* sixty years ago, and the matter was forgotten.

Due to the thoughtful study of Prof. Alex. Winchell (see his book *Sparks From a Geologist's Hammer*), however, we have more information about the coin found 114 feet below the surface during an artesian well boring at Lawnridge, Ill., north of Peoria, in December, 1871. This coin, made of copper, was of the thickness and size of a quarter, of uniform thickness, and round with its edges apparently cut. Most remarkable is the fact that its designs were not stamped with a die or engraved, but etched in some manner with an acid.

On one side was a human figure with one hand holding a child, and the other arm raised as if in defense. The figure wore a headdress made of quills. Around the border of the coin were undecipherable hieroglyphics. On the opposite side was the bust of another human figure with a hand upraised, a headdress with two long tufts, and beside it the faint outline of a quadruped and another circle of hieroglyphics.

The coin was exhibited at the Geological Section of the American Association convention at Buffalo in 1876. "No one could offer any explanation of the object or the circumstances of its discovery. . . . But by what means were they (the figures) etched? And by what means was the uniform thickness of the copper produced?" (Winchell).

Sent to the Smithsonian Institution, the coin was examined by William Dubois who presented a report on it to the American Philosophical Society. He felt sure, he said, that "the object had passed through a rolling-mill, and that the cut edges gave further evidence of the machine shop . . . yet the tooth of time is plainly visible." And earlier, in 1851, it was noted that a large copper ring and an iron object that was compared to a boat-hook had been found 120 feet below the surface in Whiteside County, Ill., fifty miles northwest from Peoria County.

What other objects lie hidden below our feet that tell a story of a long-vanished day when a great civilization flourished beneath our aeon-aged sun?

Men of Mystery

A STUDENT of history is often astonished and puzzled by the personalities that flash like meteors across the pages of the past, men of destiny who changed the course of empires, inventors who proved their powers but refused to surrender their secrets, and others who simply had strange abilities that made them outstanding characters. Invariably their origins were obscure or untraceable, and many of them vanished after playing their brief but incredible role in the drama of mankind's affairs.

There was Genghis Khan, a barbarian who could not write his name, but who outgeneraled the military leaders of three empires, drew up law

codes for fifty peoples, planned cities, and conquered half the known world; historians term his enigmatic career "an inexplicable fact." And there was Cagliostro, Merlin, Tamerlane, Attila, the Princess Caraboo, Paracelsus, Count St. Germain, Kaspar Hauser, and others so mysterious that they remain anonymous.

Kaspar Hauser, for example, suddenly appeared, bewildered and outlandishly dressed, in the village square of Nuremberg, Germany, in May, 1828. Peasants who noticed the confused manner and queer walk of the youth, about seventeen years of age, found him speechless, but holding a letter addressed to the captain of a cavalry regiment stationed in the city. He was taken to the captain and questioned, but the only words he could speak: "I want to be a soldier like my father was!" were obviously without meaning to him and had been memorized. Evidently he had traveled a distance as his feet were swollen. He had no conception of time, sex or the relative distance of objects. And he could write his name in a clear, legible hand, but nothing more.

Town officials took an interest in this boy who apparently "had dropped from the sky." It was found that he could stomach nothing but black bread and water, had no knowledge of the most common articles, and could see in the dark and observe stars in daylight. He was in full possession of his mental faculties, but as undeveloped as an infant. Slowly, by means of signs over a period of months, he was taught to speak, and it was found that he had previously existed as far back as he could remember in a dark cell, apparently underground, where day and night were meaningless.

He had a guardian, but, curiously, could not remember the man's face. He had lived on bread and water, never heard any noise, and finally was taught by his strange keeper to walk, to write his name, and repeat the only sentence he could speak when found. Then he was taken to the outside world where the shock of new knowledge and fresh air caused him to faint. His memory of his trip to Nuremberg was vague and bewildered.

Kaspar Hauser's fame spread all over Europe, but not a clue to his mysterious past was ever brought to light. He always spoke with what is described as a very odd accent. A year after his appearance he was attacked by an unknown assailant who escaped after inflicting a minor stab wound on the boy's forehead. Then, four years later, came his murder.

It happened in a park where Kaspar was out walking over new-fallen snow. He had staggered from the park after being stabbed in the side by an assassin that he identified as his previous assailant. Taken to his adopted home, he died a few hours later. But there were no other footprints but the boy's in the snow-covered park, and it was the testimony of physicians that Kaspar could not have made the wound himself due to its position. The death of the "Mystery Boy of Europe" was as mysterious as his origin.

It was in Germany, too, a century later, that

another puzzling incident occurred. About the year 1928 the Bremen correspondent for the Hearst newspaper chain reported that there was a mysterious spot on the main road north of the city where vehicles of every type, from trucks to bicycles, were thrown into the ditch when the unpredictable and baffling vortex-like force was in effect. Large warning signs were erected, and police authorities enforced a three-mile speed limit through the area at all times. Scientists were brought to the scene, but they were unable to detect the nature or origin of the force.

Then, one day, two strange men appeared and offered to stop the force and recurring accidents. They arrived at the spot with a spade and a small copper box, and while they dug a hole beside the road they permitted the curious officials present to look inside the box. The interior contained two multi-pointed stars riveted together in the center, with the points bent outward from the plane. Refusing to explain, the men then closed the box, buried it in the hole, and disappeared without trace. The force was no longer effective, but nearby residents, who up to this time had enjoyed good radio reception, were troubled thereafter with severe static. As far as is known this box still lies somewhere beside this Bremen road.

U. S. Navy officials are currently seeking to rediscover the secret of changing water into a fuel for internal combustion engines, once offered them by John Andrews, but baffled engineers can offer the experimenters little encouragement. Nevertheless, early in 1917, Andrews, a Portuguese who had been living near Pittsburgh, Pa., drove to New York City in an automobile using water and a few drops of a greenish fluid for fuel. He appeared before Captain E. P. Jessop, senior engineering officer at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, and offered to operate any engine there with his watery mixture.

There is no doubt about Andrews' ability. He proved it before naval experts that included Dr. Miller Hutchinson, assistant to Navy Secretary Edison. With either plain or salt water and his mysterious fluid engines ran at 75 percent of maximum efficiency, without odor or steam, and with the exhaust clear and colorless. At the final test he was locked in a bare room, without a water drain, yet he was successful.

Taken to Washington, D. C., before the Bureau of Engineering, Andrews was asked how much he wanted for his secret. He demanded two million dollars. The navy agreed, but insisted the money be placed in escrow with a bank until the inventor had taught ten naval officers the formula. Andrews refused, then disappeared. It was later found that he went to England where he made several demonstrations before British naval officers and English auto clubs. Again there was a delay in coming to terms, and again Andrews vanished. And here the story ends in obscurity.

BUT mysterious characters are not limited to inventors. There was the "Princes Caraboo" who appeared at the door of a cottage near Bristol, England, on an evening in 1817, and in an unknown language asked for food. Later she came to America and gave demonstrations of her strange writing in Philadelphia. In 1851 a mysterious stranger was found wandering in confusion near Frankfurt, Germany, who gave his place of origin as *Laxaria* or *Sakria*. And in 1905 a young man was picked up by police in Paris as a vagrant who spoke in an unknown language and said he was from *Lisbian*. There are a number of such cases, all alike in possessing not only a bewildered knowledge of their origin, but in speaking in languages scholars cannot identify.

Many of these characters appear nude, and can offer no information at all about themselves. Often there are a series of such appearances which imply a common appearing-point. Five naked so-called "wild men" and one girl appeared in Connecticut in January, 1888. Between the years 1920-23 six such persons were found near the village of Romford in England. Early on the evening of January 6, 1914, in weather bitterly cold, a naked man appeared in Chatham; and six years later the nude body of another man, with death due to exposure, was found in a field in Hampshire, England. Despite wide publicity and the display of photographs in these cases, the individuals were never identified. Additional details will be found in *The Books of Charles Fort*.

Now comes the most amazing case of all. During the winter of 1904-5 the most incredible outbreak of mass mania, extensive slaughter of sheep, and astonishing phenomena in general, all co-occurring, that is reroded in history took place in England and Wales. Against the background of these widespread, puzzling sheep-killings and human emotional panics, there were numerous reports of mysterious lights in the sky that often followed groups of persons, weird death and suicides, the "spontaneous combustion" of human bodies, phantoms, fires of untraceable origin, strange trance states, and the unexplainable transportation of objects.

Nothing like this bewildering and crowded display of enigmatic events is known; it stands unique in the long story of man's existence. And during these winter months ten "wild men" of unknown origin appeared in England. One of them spoke in an unknown language, and had in his possession a book with writing that Scotland Yard could not decipher. Sent to experts at Oxford University, it could not be read in any language known to earth past or present.

From what dim realm beyond our ken did these mystifying forces emerge? And what is the baffling origin of these characters who so suddenly and strangely appear?

THE END

BEYOND THE VEIL OF SCIENCE



By
Alexander Blade



JOHNN PUCKERING was dead. His heart had stopped. He had drawn his last breath. The body of the elderly market gardener lay white and motionless beneath the vivid white light of the operating room in a London hospital. Dr. G. Perceval Mills, the surgeon, massaged the heart, "only from a sense of duty," he wrote later, "and without real hope of success."

Then came a faint beat, a pulse. Artificial respiration was applied. And then, after long, anxious minutes, the consciousness of John Puckering came back from the Beyond, back from the valley of the shadow of death. Within three weeks, states the sober report in the *British Medical Journal*, he was discharged as cured.

But John Puckering was an unwilling Lazarus. He was not happy about his return to physical life. His visit to a realm that we are all destined to see had brought him only the sensations of happiness and contentment. When the story of his amazing experience was given to the public early in 1935, London newspaper reporters interviewed him for more details. And here, collected from the accounts published at the time, is the story of a man who pierced the veil between life and death and came back:

"I do not wish to appear ungrateful to Dr. Mills, but I wish he had not brought me back. I was very happy over there. No one would ever fear death if they knew as I know. Once I was afraid, but having tasted death I am afraid no longer.

"I suddenly found myself in a room, much bigger than any room I have ever seen. It must have been night, for the room was lighted very clearly. The light was brighter than electric light, yet somehow it was comforting. Where the light came from I do not know, for I did not notice any lamps.

"In fact, I did not notice any of the surroundings, because I was so interested in the people in the room. There were a lot of them. And they were all grown-up men and women. They wore clothes like you and I and looked like ordinary people. All their faces looked fresh. They were like the faces of very healthy people who are out of the doors most of the time.

"I felt awkward. I wondered what to do. But that soon passed off, because all the people looked so friendly. They smiled at me. Everybody there looked so happy. I saw my wife. She died,

as people say, more than a year ago, but I saw her there clearly and she looked very happy.

"I saw other people I used to know. There was one man who used to be the postman. He died five years ago. And there was another who passed away seven years ago. When I looked at him he knew who I was. He smiled at me and nodded. Then somehow the light in the room began to change. It was as though daylight was coming. I don't remember any more."

And so John Puckering returned to the life we now know with the memory of his experience to sustain him in the twilight years to come. A landmark by day and a star at night, he now knew that for him the valley of death was but a road that led to home.

Vehicles of the Spirit

THE experience of John Puckering is not unique; there are many similar cases on record. And these glimpses of a life beyond the grave are a part of the phenomenon of bilocation, as it is called in theology, or astral projection, as it is termed by psychic students. The consciousness of man can be separated from his physical body for brief periods during physical life, and death is but a permanent projection.

In analyzing hundreds of reports of projection experiences, however, we find that only a small number—about five percent—include apparent penetrations to the realm where dwell the so-called dead. The average projector, in making either an experimental or spontaneous projection, remains here on the physical plane, although, as a rule, he is invisible to other persons and cannot affect physical matter. He is in a borderland state known as the "plane of forces," and he finds himself very much alone. Although earthbound entities are occasionally observed, especially in large cities, the average projector seldom meets one.

Between this physical world and the astral planes there exists a veil, or "etheric web," which manifests as a soft, penetrating light or glow filtering through the atmosphere and all physical objects. It becomes brighter as darkness increases, and in the early morning hours, when most projections occur and the vitality of life reaches its lowest ebb, it often resembles a gray fog.

It is beyond this astral light or veil, in states of increased vibration and time-space curvatures,

that the innumerable planes of the astral world exist in the atmosphere of our planet. The veil acts as a barrier for the average projector. And while it is true that the planes apparently merge into one another, it is also true that the demarcations between them are definite.

How is it possible, then, for a projected consciousness to occasionally penetrate this veil and make a brief visit to the planes beyond?

The belief that man has a number of subtle or spiritual bodies—vehicles for his spirit and consciousness that are progressively greater in vibratory refinement—is a part of the age-old esoteric doctrine that underlies the world's great religions. The number is usually given as seven. Moreover, studies of projection experiences provide quite a bit of evidence to support this view. The entire question of man and his bodies, or "doubles," is a puzzling one, but there are a number of reports on record in which projectors found their consciousness separated not only from their physical bodies, but from second, more subtle, bodies as well.

There is practically no evidence that a projected consciousness can penetrate the veil simply by an act of will. But, on the other hand, there is evidence that the veil can be penetrated by projecting the consciousness into a more subtle body than the vehicle used in the usual projection. The astral world is a realm of various mediums or affinities, and it is simply a matter of entering a medium in a vehicle that coincides with that vibratory medium.

For example, Yram, the French student of projection in his book *Practical Astral Projection*, tells of being able to achieve a series of projections from a series of bodies, these vehicles being left behind him as he passed from plane to plane.

Mrs. Marjorie Livingston, writing in *Light*, the English psychic magazine, some years ago, tells of visiting the higher astral planes with a guide. In order to enter a large temple on one of these spiritual planes, she had to pass out of the vehicle her consciousness was using into a more subtle one. Later, when she emerged from the temple, this first vehicle was lying on the steps at the temple entrance in apparent sleep. As her guide awakened it, she suddenly became conscious in it. "Here is an instance," she wrote, "in which, during the space of a few minutes, I had been active in three layers of consciousness, each with their corresponding forms, and each form a representation of myself easily recognizable as a personality."

As to the nature of the higher vehicles, very little is definitely known. Dr. Hector Durville, once president of the Magnetic Society of France, in his book *Le Fantôme des Vivants*, tells of an astonishing experimental separation of the spiritual vehicles that is almost incredible. If the phenomenon actually occurred as pictured, and the doctor was not unconsciously deceived, it was the most amazing experiment in psychic history.

According to Dr. Durville's account, he placed

his best hypnotic subject into the deepest stage of trance possible, then commanded her various bodies to separate, one from the other, where they were observed and described by a clairvoyant. The first body was, of course, the physical; the second was a more subtle duplicate of the physical; the third resembled the physical, but was smaller and surrounded by an oval radiation with two bars of similar radiation over the head; the fourth appeared as a torch of leaping flame; the fifth vehicle looked like a vivid ball of white light radiating forth powerful streams or rays; the sixth had a base, curved like a boomerang and pointed at both ends, surmounted by a mass in the shape of a triangle; the seventh was a web of light, roughly circular in shape with irregular outlines, the bars of light radiating from a center and being interspersed by mist-like waves, and the entire appearance being surmounted by what seemed to be a leaping flame.

It seems impossible that this experiment could have been made without death resulting to the subject, and it is likewise difficult to believe that even the best of clairvoyants could register the high vibrations of the more subtle bodies. Nevertheless, Dr. Durville's report is interesting, and future research may serve to confirm his observations.

The Planes Beyond

A REALM where thoughts become realities and where time and space become more and more relative, the astral world with its myriad planes, its heavens and hells, its relics of earth's past and visible premonitions of tomorrow, is truly the great "treasure house of images." Between physical matter, which can be regarded as energy curbed by time and space into a minimum of activity, and the other extreme of energy manifesting as maximum activity in its pure ultimate essence, lie all the numberless planes or states and the vehicles that coincide with them. Each consciousness is limited by the nature of the plane on which it exists. And since we progress by experiencing and then casting off the attractions of lower states, it follows that each consciousness determines its own place in the evolutionary scale or ladder.

Man creates, with his mind and his desires, his Gehennas and his Paradises. The astral planes can be roughly divided into three groups. Just beyond the astral veil, close to the physical atmosphere of the earth, are the sub-planes of Gehenna. Here entities are bound by their base desires, and they are punished, not for their sins or material wishes, but by them. Here dwell the single-track minds directed toward the false, the passing, the evil factors in life. The miser has his thought-created gold which he cannot spend; the drunkard, the dope addict, has his substances which fail to lead him from stern reality into foggy, dreamy pleasure. And the murderer, his conscience freed from his physical cloak at last, is haunted by the thought-formed phantoms of his victims.

They all suffer the fate of Tantalus. Their desires are burned out, purged in the flames of mental creation without reaction. Disgust finally sets in; the current of desire changes and they ultimately progress to a higher plane with few exceptions. The average person will never know this realm.

The medium planes are devoted to the working out of desires and ambitions that are neither spiritual nor base. During our present lives we are consciously or subconsciously working up stresses or desires or goals of this type. There are the poems we always wanted to write, the music we always wanted to compose. On these planes we will satisfy these desires—work off these stresses. The artist will paint his masterpiece; the mechanic will design his machine. As Kipling put it: "No one shall work for money, and no one shall work for fame; but each for the joy of the working." Here, too, on one of the planes, is the Heavenly Oasis, Valhalla, the Happy Hunting Ground of the Indians, all in different regions.

The highest planes are the spiritual planes. No description can be given. Regarding this "third heaven," St. Paul wrote that it is not "lawful" (possible) to explain its nature. Here, in a light so intense as to be beyond any comparison, the soul enjoys the freedom of roaming outer space.

In general, it may be said that the closer a plane exists to the physical world, the more it resembles this world we now know. In fact, on some of the lower planes, the great cities of the physical world are duplicated, although they are larger than their originals and include buildings and other features that have passed away on the mundane level. Consisting of farms, villages and cities, fields, forests and lakes, much of the astral world is similar to this physical existence, but with activity at a more intense pace and the problems of our sensate, mercantile culture absent.

Etheric Experiences

ILLUSTRATIVE of these beliefs are the following experiences. It should be pointed out, however, that the very nature of the astral planes causes individual reports to vary to some extent. Moreover, the projected consciousness is always in danger of passing into a dream state in which imaginary events are regarded as actual experiences, although the difference between the two is quite definite to the student of projection. Selected from a large number of reports on file, however, the writer regards the following examples as authentic penetrations through the etheric veil to the planes beyond.

Our first case has been reported by Maurice A. Craven, of Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Mr. Craven felt himself leave his body, rising upward as if in an elevator, and under the apparent control of an unknown intelligence. Then came a merging of views, a shifting of scenes. He suddenly found himself on a boulevard lined with trees and beautiful homes made of a material resembling white marble. He was taken to a lovely garden where

he met his deceased grandparents. A long conversation followed. He also met two aunts and an uncle who had passed on from the physical world.

Later he continued walking down the boulevard, passing many happy persons. He wrote: "One curious thing was a house under construction. I knew it was being built in some mysterious manner, but I was told my memory would not retain the secret when I returned to earth again. This proved a fact." Mr. Craven was also told that the air was vitalized for them, that they possessed everything they required, and that their work was a labor of love. "The memory of my journey will live with me until I am ready to go over into the Great Beyond."

Our second case appeared in the *New York Magazine of Mysteries*, a remarkable publication that was issued during the year 1901, almost fifty years ago. It was written by a Mrs. A. Spaulding, who had her experience while mourning the death of a beloved aunt who had passed away six months before. Under the influence of an invisible intelligence (which may have been either a spirit guide or her superconscious mind which controls the phenomenon of projection), Mrs. Spaulding felt herself pass from her physical body, which she saw lying on the bed with the astral cord attached to its head, and rising upward finally came to a "seemingly gauze curtain" which parted revealing solid ground and beautiful scenery. She noticed, too, the peculiar light of the atmosphere, pearl-like and restful, but so clear the smallest object could be vividly observed.

Her aunt appeared, looking younger, and took her to a small cottage, where she noticed that her aunt had an arbor of her favorite roses. "Most of my desires have been gratified," the aunt said, "and the ability to satisfy your desires is gained by kindness to others while on the earth plane. You have hands with which to do kind deeds; your lips can speak loving words. Make good use of your time and talents, that you may come to your final home rich with the harvest of your sowing." The aunt also told her that they were actually at a half-way point between the earth plane and the realms where live the so-called dead.

Later Mrs. Spaulding returned downward to earth, saw her body again on the bed, entered it, and instantly awakened. "This experience," she wrote, "for me has been ever a beacon light. I know for myself that the other world is a counterpart of this, minus the shadows. I know that mountains and valleys, rivers and lakes, trees and flowers, are more real there than here, and, best of all, our loved ones live to love and welcome us home when we are called upon to change to a higher life."

Our final example is offered by Donald Galbraith, head of a large glass manufacturing company in Ohio. He was projected while under an anesthetic during an operation. He walked out of the building, down the street, tried to speak to

several friends who could not see him, and finally approached his church. He noticed that things seemed subdued, different. Noises came to his ears in altered tones; he felt a curious sense of isolation, a detachment from all material things and the rest of mankind. And then, suddenly, he slipped and fell to the ground.

He arose to find himself in a different world—trees, a river, purple hills in the distance. A pearly light pulsed over the scene. Then he heard voices, and was greeted by a group of friends and relatives who had died. His daughter, who had passed on while an infant fifteen years before, was now a young girl. They were not angels, winged radiant beings, but just human loved ones. In bewilderment, he went from one to the other, holding his daughter's hand. Then his father told him it was time for him to return to earth. Again he seemed to fall and roll down-

ward. He awakened with his doctor and his wife standing at his side.

Merging imperceptibly with this world we know, like clouds above the mountains and air above the sea, is the world to come. Mr. Craven's reference to a "secret" regarding the construction of a home he witnessed is a mystery the writer believes that he can explain. All the objects in the astral world are visualized into existence by the creative ability of the minds of its inhabitants. It is a realm where wishes and desires attain objective fulfillment, where dreams come true, and where the mind truly creates its environment—be it a heaven or a hell.

But it is also a world of rest and creative tasks, blessed by reunions with those who have gone before, crowned by achievements that complete our character—a destination that we are traveling toward and a goal we all shall know.

WEIRD WONDERS OF THE WAR

By Vincent H. Gaddis

THERE were mirages of mystery, signs in the skies, prophecies and apparitions! The first shots of the great war confirmed premonitions, and the world-wide struggle came to an end with puzzled airmen watching the foe lights. An American bulldozer in England released a mischievous phantom, and the Red Knight of Germany flew again—

These are the psychic riddles and baffling occurrences that are destined to become classics in the annals of mysterious lore. They will join the enigmas of the first World War—the spectral howmen of Mons, the cross in the sky observed just before the Battle of the Somme, and the curse that fell upon the car in which Archduke Francis Ferdinand was murdered.

In war man is close to death and the Great Unknown. Strange things do happen! Psychic experiences played such a definite part in turning the tides of certain battles and transmitting information under unusual conditions that they became a part of the records of war and intelligence offices—a fact revealed by Edwin T. Woodhall, of the British Secret Service, the late Major R. T. M. Scott, and others.

Collected from the reports of war correspondents and press dispatches, this is the story of events during history's greatest conflict that only the knowledge of tomorrow will be able to fully explain.

Mysterious Mirages

THERE were warnings in the skies of earth! As the tentacles of the Nazi octopus lengthened and war drew closer, a series of strange reports came from several different countries.

In March, 1935, over Southern Norway and

Denmark, an object described as "a large shining form resembling a gigantic snake, wriggling forth in the northwestern sky" appeared for half an hour in the early evening. According to a correspondent for the *Tidens Tegn* (Norway) who observed it at Grimstad, it had four or five curves marked off by shadows, and was in a vertical position with its "head" down toward the earth. There were no clouds, and the vision was clear. It was exceptionally brilliant. The *Stavanger Aftenblad* for March 26 contains a complete description of the phenomenon and sketches of it made by the well-known artist Naesheim who was a witness.

A similar object appeared three times over the city of Cruz Alta, Brazil; twice in December, 1935, and again in July, 1937. On its last appearance the "snake" had its "head" toward the earth, the head appearing as a ball of fire. And in 1937 reports from Poland told of swords and coffins in the sky over the German border, a phenomenon witnessed by both Germans and Poles.

On the night of November 24, 1935, a "flaming sword" was observed in the heavens between Palestine and Dallas, Texas. Dr. J. D. Boon, professor of astrophysics at Southern Methodist University, stated that no comet or stellar phenomenon of any kind had been scheduled to appear. One witness, a newspaper editor, described the appearance as "a narrow, bright shaft of light, absolutely stationary and vertical, an exact replica of a sword."

Mysterious blue flashes appeared in the southern sky of Sussex, England, on the night of October 2, 1938. The flashes were followed by a "sudden rift in the sky where a most beautiful

blue-green radiance shone. Through this there appeared to drop a fiery body, vivid and lovely, which disappeared in a second. After this there was only one faint flash."

A year later war broke out. In December, 1939, after Soviet bombers had visited Helsinki and while mobilization of troops was in progress in Finland, another sky vision appeared. According to the Finnish paper *Evangeliskt Vittnesbörd*, the occurrence took place close to midnight and lasted for about a half hour. It began as a ball of fire growing larger and larger, then changing from a red to a vivid white color as sudden rays from the eastern and western horizons merged.

As the light spread a shining object, seemingly a huge human-like figure, appeared for a few moments at the point where the rays merged. Then, slowly, the vision faded into the night leaving the spectators silent and bewildered.

The war continued. Then, in November, 1942, press dispatches told of a light in the sky that formed a "V" off Casablanca, observed by the American naval task force that forced the capitulation of the city. Lleut. George Simpson, of New Haven, Conn., reported that the weird nocturnal light had been noticed by the crews of vessels off the coast while the task force was underway toward the battle.

There were two reports of crosses in the sky over Malta, the Mediterranean island that so bravely withstood bombardment against heavy odds. The first appearance was in May, 1942, after a series of heavy raids by the enemy. Several hours later a number of Spitfires arrived to reinforce the island's defenses. The second vision took place in September, 1943, shortly before Italy capitulated.

Finally, just before twilight during an air-raid alert on the evening of April 27, 1944, the most remarkable sky vision of all occurred. It was reported from Ipswich, a town just above the Strait of Dover in England, and for fifteen minutes hundreds of spectators had gazed skyward at the appearance of Christ on a cross. The Rev. Harold G. Green, vicar of the Church of St. Nicholas at Ipswich, made a personal investigation of the phenomenon, and within four days he had a list of 2,000 witnesses and 500 detailed reports that agreed in all particulars.

A controversy over the nature of the appearance followed, but whatever the explanation may be, the spectacle caused excitement that did not easily die. Several hundred persons, many of them high-ranking officers in the armed services, crowded into police stations to write and sign statements. And on the evening of May 7 a large mass meeting was held to hear the Rev. Green express complete confidence in the authenticity of the vision.

"I have satisfied myself beyond every doubt," he told his listeners, "that the vision of Christ on the Cross was seen in the sky by hundreds of people. I regard the sign as a definite good omen, and if only a dozen people had seen it instead of hun-

dreds, I should still say it was God's call to this our nation."

Premonitions

ON AN evening late in the summer of 1939, several weeks before the outbreak of hostilities, Mrs. Axel Wenner-Gren, wife of the well-known Swedish industrialist, was climbing the stairs of her home to retire. Suddenly, standing at the top of the staircase, she saw the apparition of a man, water dripping from his wet clothing, and holding in his arms the body of a child whose forehead bore a bleeding wound. As she stopped in astonishment, the phantom form faded away.

Soon after Herr Wenner-Gren and his wife went on a cruise in their yacht, the *Southern Cross*. Over the radio came the news of approaching conflict. When the *Athena* was torpedoed, the distress signals were picked up by the *Southern Cross* which hurried to the scene of the disaster. As Mrs. Wenner-Gren started to aid in the rescue of survivors, the first person to climb to the yacht's deck was the man of her vision, and in his arms he held the body of a dying child, a bleeding cut on its forehead.

From a realm beyond space and time came premonitions—visions of the future that during the war were confirmed in the midst of dropping bombs and screaming shells. When the Japs, without warning, struck Pearl Harbor, Fred S. Cook, a war correspondent of Toronto, Canada, and later a member of the Royal Canadian Air Force, remembered. He remembered a night in 1938 when he was stopping in a small Chinese village. He had retired early. A dream, so vivid that it had remained in his consciousness for three years, had formed in his restless slumbers—

He was lying in the sun on the beach at Wai-kiki. A roaring of many motors assailed his ears, and he looked up to see a large number of planes passing overhead. On their wings, clear in the brilliant light, was the insignia of the Rising Sun. He leaped to his feet and ran toward Honolulu. Bombs whistled through the air and great explosions followed. Glancing out toward the harbor, he saw ships sinking and burning.

Yes, Fred Cook remembered. And he remembered that when he had awakened three years before from his startling vision, he was running down the main street of the Chinese village, yelling a warning. And it had taken him several minutes to realize that he was far from Honolulu.

After the Pearl Harbor attack came the casualty messages. One arrived at the home of Seaman Curtis Farnsworth in Leominster, Mass., announcing his death. But the sailor's sister, Mrs. Eileen Peterson, had a dream in which she saw her brother alive with a bandage on his head. A Requiem Mass was held. But on the following day another message arrived from the navy department stating that Farnsworth "is now accounted for and will probably communicate with you at his first opportunity."

And it was on the night of May 26, 1942, that Charles Osburne, of Bremerton, Wash., had a

dream while sleeping on board the U.S.S. *Lexington*. In his vision he watched three Jap planes approach the aircraft carrier from the port bow. Torpedoes were dropped, two of them striking the bow. He worked for hours with the rest of the crew to keep the vessel afloat. Then, after a series of internal explosions, he was forced to abandon the ship with his companions. When he awakened he told a number of his shipmates about his vision.

Two days later the dream became vivid reality. The three Jap planes appeared, the two torpedoes hit the port bow, and after a long battle the mighty *Lexington* was doomed by internal explosion. Every dream detail, as foreseen deep in his inner subconsciousness, came to pass on the war-torn Pacific.

Phantoms

FROM the files of the Royal Air Force comes the strange story of a sky phantom as reported by Lieut. Grayson, a British pursuit pilot. While on night patrol near Dover on an evening early in 1940, Lieut. Grayson noticed a mysterious appearing plane silhouetted in the moonlight far above him. Throwing his ship into a climb, he quickly rose far above the English Channel coast and approached the puzzling plane that was pursuing a straight course through the night.

As he drew closer, Lieut. Grayson suddenly gasped in bewilderment. Staying well ahead, but close enough for a clear view in the bright moonlight, was a biplane of the first World War. On its wings was the Iron Cross insignia of the Kaiser's Germany, and on its fuselage was marked the symbol of the Flying Circus led by Baron Manfred von Richthofen, Red Knight of Germany, killed in 1918.

Despite its apparent antique construction, the phantom plane from out of the past kept beyond the modern pursuit ship. After a bit Lieut. Grayson ran into a rain squall, and when he emerged the biplane had disappeared. Returning to his base, he reported the incident, and it was duly filed with air force records.

But one of the most remarkable phantoms reported during the war was an invisible one which was, nevertheless, very active. Late in the summer of 1944 an American army bulldozer was used to widen a lane in the village of Great Leighs, in Essex, England. In doing so a large stone was moved, and then the trouble started.

Church bells began to ring at odd hours, huge five-foot stones were moved long distances, and straw racks were overturned on windless nights. One of the large boulders mysteriously appeared in front of the local tavern while it was filled with customers. It required several men to move it. Reports of sheep escaping from walled fields and the scattering of heavy scaffolding poles like matchsticks followed.

Inquiry revealed that the stone moved by the bulldozer had been over the charred remains of the "Witch of Scrapfaggot Green," burned at the stake two centuries before. As was customary in

those days, the ashes of the witch were buried beneath a heavy stone to keep her from ever again annoying the villagers.

So persistent were the eerie stories of weird occurrences at the village, that the London *Sunday Pictorial* sent an investigator to the scene. He reported that the events were actually taking place, and that he was mystified by the things he had not only heard but observed. Psychical research experts, when approached, attributed the phenomena to the release of a *poltergeist*—a mischievous phantom that takes delight in playing tricks on mortals.

Perhaps the entire matter was best summed up by Arthur Sykes, chief warden of the village, when he said: "I don't believe in witches, but then my granddad didn't believe in radio either."

The Foo Lights

OF ALL war mysteries, none is stranger than the foo lights, described as globes or balls of fire, which followed our B-29s on night flights over Germany toward the close of the war, and later over Japan. They were from one to several feet in diameter, often changed color, and did not reflect radar waves. They were first noticed in Europe in November, 1944, and the first public report of the mystery was made by war correspondent Bob Wilson on New Year's Day, 1945.

The lights, usually red or orange, appeared and vanished at will. Evasive maneuvers by pilots often failed to shake them off to an astonishing degree. Sometimes they appeared in sets of twos and threes, and on one occasion when a pilot suddenly swerved his ship, the lights following him continued on in the same direction as if napping, and then pulled up to follow sheepishly. As globes of silver and gold with a metallic finish, they were observed several times by day-flying pilots.

At no time did these lights harm the bombers. They were noticed ahead, at the side and in the rear of planes; sometimes they followed at a distance, while at other times they almost rode the tails of the ships they plagued. Their appearance over Germany came to an end after Allied ground forces captured the area east of the Rhine, known to be the site of several German scientific experimental stations.

But the lights reappeared in Japan. All likely explanations such as St. Elmo's fire, flares, balloons, or propelled aerial bombs of a new type, have failed. It is still not definite, at the time of writing, that they were produced by the enemy, although this seems the only reasonable explanation considering the two general locations of their appearance. If so, their purpose remains a puzzle that still bewilders air force veterans.

Thus the second World War, presenting so many enigmas, came to an end with a mystery that remains unsolved. Many of these problems will be remembered and studied in years to come, and explanations may follow, but nevertheless, in that future era, there will still be mysteries to solve for the realm of the unknown is a world without end.

A LOT OF HOT AIR



By Lee Casey



AS EVERYONE knows, the machine that ushered in the Industrial Revolution in the England and Europe of the early nineteenth century, was the old reliable steam engine. The steam engine was really nothing new, though its application to producing work was. The ancient Greek philosopher, Heron, devised a machine which used steam to rotate itself. In fact, this early steam engine was an application of the most modern ideas of jet propulsion. All it consisted of was a boiler, supported so as to be capable of rotation. From the body of the boiler arms protruded, through which escaping steam, caused by a fire beneath the hollow boiler, escaped. Because the protruding arms were bent tangent to the body of the boiler, and it was freely mounted, it rotated. Presto, the first steam engine!

Unfortunately the idea was not put to practical use. All the elements of a practical engine were there, but as so often happened with the Greeks, they failed to exploit it. Ideas for steam engines were proposed thereafter all through the centuries by various philosophers, but none ever succeeded in doing anything with the numerous schemes.

When James Watt devised his reciprocating steam engine with the definite object in mind of using it to operate pumps for clearing mines of water, he finally made concrete the logical utilization of steam. While his early piston steam engine was less a "steam" engine than an "atmospheric" engine, it served its purpose—and as is now apparent, it ushered in an era of incredible prosperity and promise.

One interesting sidelight of the early steam engine such as invented by Watt, was the fact that the machining of very large cylinders and pistons offered almost insurmountable obstacles. There were no huge milling machines or gigantic lathes such as we find today. The cylinders and pistons had to be cast from wooden patterns and then laboriously hand-filled to fit each other. The result was that accuracies were measured in large fractions of an inch instead of in thousandths or ten thousandths as is the case today.

Nevertheless, the steam engine contributed enormously to the development of our culture.

Because steam engines are notoriously inefficient, it was only natural to look askance at the common reciprocating steam engine and look for something better. The steam turbine proved superior for many installations. Gradually the gasoline engine of the Otto type was developed. After it came Dr. Rudolph Diesel's engine which was similar to the Otto engine except that it employed no ignition system. All of these machines are familiar.

Early philosophers however had noticed another phenomenon. When air is heated, like steam, it too expands and is capable of doing work. Several simple engines were devised using this system of hot air. But they did not progress very far, not only because of the difficulty of constructing accurate machines, but mainly because of the high temperatures involved, the engine would not operate. The hot air engine is very similar to the steam engine except that it operates at a higher temperature. When the hot air has expanded and done its work in the cylinder of the engine, some means must be found of sweeping the exhaust air, still very hot, out of the chamber, cooling the chamber and feeding it more expanding hot air to operate the piston.

The problem seemed insoluble up until the thirties of this century and by then there seemed to be little need for such an engine with the tremendous varieties of prime movers now available.

DURING the second World War, the Phillips company of Holland spent a great deal of time on the research involved in designing such an engine. With petroleum fuels, gas and the like scarce, it would be desirable to have an engine that could run on almost any sort of fuel.

They turned to the hot-air engine. The results of their work far exceeded their expectations. First of all they designed a very simple compact hot-air engine that would operate on any source of heat.

The "secret" of the machine lay in two things; first, modern precision machining; second, a suitable heat absorber or exchanger. With the latter the problem of operating the engine efficiently became relatively simple. The hot-air engine operates much like any conventional gas engine except that the fuel is burned outside the cylinder as in a steam engine. This permits any sort of heating arrangement from coal to oil to gas to wood to paper! The hot air is introduced into a cylinder where it does work by expanding against a piston. An ingenious arrangement of valving permits the exhaust hot air to be fully utilized, and the cylinder of the machine does not become hot.

The machine is very efficient. It is cheap. It is compact. It requires relatively little servicing. It has a high power to weight ratio. Very likely it will be used in vehicles.

One of the major markets for such an engine is or will be, in countries which are poor in liquid fuels. With the exception of the U.S., Russia, and certain parts of Asia and Northern Africa, this includes the most of the world. Particularly in backward China would such a machine prove a boon.

By rapidly refining the machine, the Phillips engineers have succeeded in creating a prime mover of the first order. Within a short time, as production facilities increase, such engines will be common, and it is not impossible that we may see a good many of them over here, especially as our own liquid fuel situation grows more critical. The world is abundantly supplied with low grade fuels in the form of poor grades of coal, etc. If such fuels can be used in driving machines, all the better. The best fuels than can be reserved

for the machines that require them.

It will be wise to keep an eye on China as this machine is distributed. That country needs, above all, a cheap source of power to supply it with transportation and electricity. It may well be, that the Phillips engine will do just that, enabling that ponderous nation to step into its rightful place as an industrial power. In addition the simplicity of the machine precludes the need for highly skilled mechanics and technicians which China also sorely lacks.

GROW YOUR OWN TOOTH FILLINGS!



By PETE BOGG



THE age of filling your teeth with silver and gold may soon be over! Wouldn't it be wonderful if your teeth would fill up and repair themselves just as a cut in your skin heals itself? A distinguished Swedish dentist, Dr. Sten Forshufvud of Gothenburg, Sweden, recently announced that he had successfully filled human tooth cavities with enamel from ox teeth, ground up and fitted to the cavity. The natural building

procedure of the damaged tooth then fed blood plasma into the ox-tooth enamel, which in turn dissolved and replaced itself with new human enamel. Dr. Forshufvud has predicted that ox enamel especially prepared to aid the growth of new tooth enamel, will very soon be available to the dental profession. His discovery should make a revolutionary change in the future treatment of damaged teeth.

BLINDING THE ENEMY EYE



By CHARLES REEVES



WE HAVE all heard of the many almost miraculous feats that have been performed with the aid of radar, but good things can sometimes be a curse as well as a blessing, especially during war. This was true of radar, and here is the little known story of the Allies' radar counter measures which made possible many of our greatest victories.

Interference of radio reception by jamming had been known for a long time, and when radar became effective, scientists on both sides were set to work to devise some method of jamming this all seeing eye. How well the Germans accomplished this task may be seen by remembering back to 1942. A large part of the German navy was bottled up in Brest, where they were being bombed daily. The ships had to be moved or sunk. The allied world was shocked when, under the cover of fog and snow the entire German fleet made its way through the English channel. The people at home had no idea of how this had been accomplished, but the British command knew that the Germans' success was due to the jamming of radar by new methods. This presented an entirely new problem and resulted in the formation of a unit known as the Radio Research Laboratory. Starting from a small nucleus early in the war this unit grew to over 800 men in 1944.

As the information needed was controlled by

the enemy rather than us, an information raid on enemy installation was the first step on the program. British paratroopers landed near Le Havre and brought back samples of German radar and counter-radar equipment. All of the means of the Laboratory were set in motion and out of the study of this captured equipment came several different methods of radar jamming or "hash" as it is called. As radar works on the reflection of sound principle, there were two main methods of jamming possible, mechanical and electronic. After much experiment, mechanical jamming was accomplished by dropping long strips of metal cut in the exact lengths of the frequency sent out by the radar. This "chaff" or "window," as it was called, caused what appeared to be a plane or flights of planes to appear on the scope of the enemy equipment, thus diverting enemy interceptors away from actual flights of Allied bombers. Over 10,000,000 pounds of aluminum foil was dropped by the 8th Air Force alone.

For electronic jamming a number of new inventions were developed and mounted on high speed planes called "ferrets." These planes, carrying between 25 and 30 different antennas, were used to search out and jam enemy search units. This blinding of the enemy eye was in a large measure responsible for the deceptive landings at Normandy and Southern France, and is a tribute to the scientific skill of the Allied scientists.

DISCUSSIONS



AMAZING STORIES will publish in each issue a selection of letters from readers. Everybody is welcome to contribute. Bouquets and brickbats will have an equal chance. Inter-reader correspondence and controversy will be encouraged through this department. Get in with the gang and have your say.

Address Your Letters to:

AMAZING STORIES "DISCUSSIONS," ZIFF-DAVIS PUBLISHING CO.
185 North Wabash Avenue, Chicago 1, Illinois

IN DEFENSE OF SHAVER

Sirs:

I wish to compliment you on your criticism of Mr. F. O. Shoup's remarks which appeared in the November issue of your magazine.

Evidently Mr. Shoup does not have a very wide reading scope or he'd never have mailed such a letter to your editor. I have been reading your magazine for some time and while once in a long time there happens to be a story you think you've read before, yet if you could hunt the other story up and compare, you'd soon see your mistake. For I have done just that.

So, Mr. Editor, I agree wholly that when a reader is so foolish to write such childish gibberish, he needs just what Mr. Shoup received.

Miss E. J. Trainor
1117 Goshen Ave.,
Elkhart, Indiana

We weren't criticizing Mr. Shoup, nor reprimanding him. We were just pointing out that he was mistaken in accusing Mr. Shaver of plagiarism. Mr. Shaver's "Gods of Venus" was original down to the last word!—Ed.

MORE ABOUT BURROUGHS

Sirs:

I was interested in the letter by Forrest O. Shoup and your answer to it in the AMAZING STORIES for November. When I read "The Gods of Venus" I noticed the resemblance to ERB'S "The Gods of Mars." Not so much the plot as the title and the ending. Although the ending of both is similar they are not exactly identical. In the Shaver story the hero, Jim Steel, sees his wife, Ceulna, attacked by the villainess, Nonur, just as the door of the time-lock closes. He is left in doubt as to whether or not she is really dead. In the Burroughs novel John Carter's last glimpse of his wife, Dejah Thoris, is of her being attacked by Phaidor, the daughter of the Father of Therns. He too, is left in doubt as to whether or not she is really dead.

You said in your answer that "as long as there is a better way of doing things, and Burroughs knew a better way, he'll be imitated." I agree

with you in that. Since Burroughs had his first Mars story published in magazine form back in 1912 there have been a flood of Interplanetary stories, especially since the appearance of the science fiction type of magazine. If I'm not mistaken, AMAZING STORIES was the first publication devoted to this sort of fiction. Not only does ERB have imitators of his Mars and Venus books but also of his Tarzan books. The present serial, Howard Browne's "The Return of Tharn" is a good example of the better type of imitation. I don't know what Mr. Burroughs thinks of all these imitations of his work but I should think that he would remember the line: "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery." (If I'm quoting correctly.)

About the series of his stories that you started before the war, is that the one that started off with "The Skeleton Men of Jupiter" and then discontinued? Let's hope that if he feels well enough to do some more writing he will finish the rest of the series. I think that he may be the favorite of many of your readers.

John Harwood
73 Rounds Street,
New Bedford, Mass.

You have summed it up pretty well. However, Mr. Browne's story is more than an imitation—Mr. Browne actually talked over his story with Mr. Burroughs, and it was enthusiastically okayed by the old master. Browne and Burroughs are good friends. And Browne admits his story is imitation, and Burroughs IS proud of it. As for sequels to Skeleton Men of Jupiter, we're afraid it is never to be. Mr. Burroughs is too ill to write.—Ed.

BEM

Sirs:

I have just purchased the October AMAZING, and am amazed to see DEATH OF A B. E. M. by Livingston. But under the circumstances I feel that the entire truth should be made known to you. Not to mention your readers if this letter gets into print.

I am writing on behalf of the Michigan Science-

Fantasy Society—whether they like it or not. A few moons back, a member of the MSFS invented a new word. That word was BEM. The meaning of said word was "Bug-Eyed Monster." Let me point out that there are no periods (.) in the word, and that it is a word and not an abbreviation. Also, BEM's are not necessarily bug-eyed. They can have ordinary eyes, varying in number with the imaginations of the individual writers or artists. Even a human who is being strangled so that his eyes *bug* out can be considered a BEM. In short, anything out of the ordinary can be a BEM.

But let me caution you against using the word BEM to describe any spiritual force, ghost or otherwise. BEMs are BEMs only if they are living or in the form of a corpse.

Hal Shapiro,
2689 Clements,
Detroit 6, Michigan

P. S.: The name of the member who invented the word BEM was Martin Alger of Royal Oak and Mackinac City, Michigan.

Thanks, Hal for the lowdown on BEMS. Mr. Livingston himself is a BEM.—Ed.

OCTOBER ISSUE OUTSTANDING

Sirs:

Just a note of appreciation for the outstanding October issue of AMAZING. Glad to hear your typographical difficulties have at last been solved, and that the familiar departments and columns will once more appear.

All the stories in the October ish were very good (even the cave-man epics, which I don't ordinarily go for). However, one tale was not only good, it was excellent—in fact, it merits the much-abused term "classic." I refer, of course, to Alexander Blade's magnificent "The Brain."

I have read twelve previous stories by Mr. Blade, but never before has he turned out one of such memorable quality—with the possible exception of his "Death Wears A Rose" in the January 1947 FA. Therefore, "The Brain" was really a surprise!

The basic concept—the conflict between humanity and the machine—has been used often, most recently by Jack Williamson for his "With Folded Hands" and its sequel in another mag. But I believe that Alexander Blade has surpassed all previous attempts to picture the horror and drama of a struggle between Man and machine for mastery of the Universe.

The descriptions of the underground installation are breathtaking. In particular, Lee's descent through the burning Brain reminded me of C. L. Moore's immortal account of the destruction of Cyrille in "Judgment Night." In both, a writer succeeds in putting across to his readers the infinite pathos inherent in the destruction of a vast and intricate mechanism.

It is noteworthy, too, that Blade did not mar the perfection of his work by tacking on the usual "formula" happy ending. In the stark and

deadly implications of his closing scene are packed drama and tragedy which will be long remembered.

Congratulations to Alexander Blade for a story which should easily be voted one of the best sf tales of 1948; congratulations to you for printing it in AMAZING!

One question before I close: according to the contents page, the illustration for "The Brain" is by Arnold Kohn—but the signature on the drawing looks to me like "Rod Ruth." Explanation?

I've heard AMAZING criticized for not imitating the other sfzines. If you continue using material as good as "The Brain," you'll have the other sfzines trying to imitate AMAZING!

Here's looking forward to future issues.

Arthur H. Rapp,
2120 Bay Street
Saginaw, Michigan

Thanks for your kind comments. You were right, it was Rod Ruth who did the illustration. We were out too late that night, it seems.—Ed.

NO . . . NO . . . NO!

Sirs:

S'matter, Deros got you? Believe it or not, this is the first "to the editor" letter I have ever written, and I have been reading your type of story since I learned to read—and it's probably my last.

First, you "clam" up on Shaver—all right—there's the Shaver Mystery Club. Then comes the omission of "Discussions." Too much Shaver? It looks like it, because, probably all Shaver fans turn first to that page to see what's going on. As far as I'm concerned, after the Shaver Mystery, no magazine of your type is complete without it.

In my opinion, for what it's worth, no one man could know all he refers to (Bible, mythology, ancient and modern history) and not have "seen" it. I wish all scoffers could and would read his stories. Or is Shaver now in some insane hospital and the whole story a "hoax" and I another "sucker?"

To top it all off, I subscribed to the "Shaver Mystery Club" magazine for four issues, quite some time ago, and received only three issues. Thinking I was a regular member, and would receive either notice or the fourth issue, I have been haunting the mail since. No Shaver—

As I said before—Deros got you? Even though I don't believe they've got you. You said once, "Watch what happens to Palmer and Shaver." Is this it? Give us "arm chair" cave hunters a break. The Shaver Mystery is more real than a lot that goes on today. Don't let it fade into oblivion. Keep Shaver's silent partners informed at least. Thank you for your time.

Sherry Andris,
2181 Shurtleff Ave.,
Napa, Calif.

No, the deros haven't got us. Perish forbid! We haven't clammed up on Shaver—we only de-

sat in calling his stories true. Yet, we don't say they aren't. We leave that up to anybody who wants to think any way he pleases. Fair enough? Nor are we discontinuing Discussions—that got ditched during the strike when the type didn't come through, but as you can plainly see, it is here again! As for what Mr. Shaver tells in his stories, we agree he sure has a wide knowledge of things. Your editor has his private belief, but he won't cram it down your throats. You want to know what your editor's "private" belief is? Ohay, he's willing—he believes every word of it! But in AMAZING STORIES it's just another manuscript by another author. Hoax? No, just a mistake in calling it true. There are readers who like to make their own decisions—and quite a few decided it was on the up and up. Fair enough! As for the Shaver Mystery Club, it is still going strong, and the fourth issue, Shaver tells us, will soon come off the presses. We think he's doing a great job with his fan magazine, considering he's only one man—and with all those deros trying to prevent it!—Ed.

STRANGE EXPERIENCE

Sirs:

When I was a little boy back in Honolulu, Hawaii, I had an experience that if I tell it to anyone, they don't seem to believe me for it.

I think I was in third grade in the year 1924, when this incident happened.

My friend and I decided to play hookey from school and go crabbing at the sand island in Honolulu. I believe that island is around two miles and a half from the shore. It was around 4:30 P.M. when my friend decided to call it a day, and told me if I would want to go home; I asked him about his catch and he showed me the crabs that he caught and he had twice as much as I; so I told him to go ahead, I'll follow later because I decided to stay just a little bit longer; and at the same time I saw a canoe with three little children and a dog approaching, so I wouldn't be frightened then, knowing that if there were children the father or the mother should be on the island.

My friend left me, and as he was far from my sight, the canoe or boat reached the island. They were about 100 yards from me, and they got off the boat and started to run around with the dog. I looked for the mother and father, but so far I didn't see either one of them. Surely, I said, they wouldn't be under the water this long, so I was curious, and went to them. Their two children were still running around, and I approached this one who was sitting down and as I came closer he had his face back of me so I told him, and said, "Hey, where's your Mother?" And as he turned around his head and looked at me his

face was an adult, but old and wrinkled. I didn't wait for him to answer. I turned around and ran as fast as my feet could carry me and fled for my dear life, leaving everything behind me including my crabs. I couldn't forget this and I've repeated it again. Those little people that I've seen were little smaller than the midgets in the circus. But no one seemed to believe me, but really and truly this incident happened to me.

Sidro L. Basa,
111 Yesler Way,
Seattle, Wash.

WE believe you, Mr. Basa! And we thank you for reporting the incident to us.—Ed.

SHOUP IS IN THE SOUP!

Sirs:

I have been reading AS for quite a while now and I have never had the courage to write to the Discussions Dept. before now. The spark that set me off is that letter from Forrest O. Shoup.

If this "escapist" has the opinion of Shaver that he seems to have, then why does he even hother to read his stories? I am a Shaver fan from a way back and it just grates against me to have anyone talk about his work the way this Shoup did! I like Burroughs myself, and have read all of his stories that I could get my hands on. As you said, Shaver's "Gods of Venus" wasn't even remotely a copy of Burroughs' "Gods of Mars." I have read both. While I like Burroughs very much, I like Shaver's style more. Of course, that is only my microscopic opinion among thousands of others.

I am really looking forward to the conclusion of "The Return of Tharn." It is a wonderful sequel to "Warrior of the Dawn." All in all I like all of your mag. May I make one suggestion though? Why not make the Discussions Dept. a little less formal and a little longer?

I don't know if this will ever see print or not, but I just wanted you to know that I agree with everything that you said to Mr. Shoup.

Georgia Bartholomew
745 Haight Street, #9,
San Francisco, Calif.

It seems Mr. Shoup really set off a storm—and it seems to have been settled quite effectively—Mr. Shaver is not guilty of plagiarism, only of a very fine story in the Burroughs manner. Hope you liked the conclusion of the sequel to "Warrior of the Dawn." We heard from Mr. Browne the other day, and he said that maybe, in a couple of months, he'd get around to finding time for us again. Well, we hope he does. We would enjoy reading another Tharn story. Well, this ends Discussions for this month. Let's see your comments on our latest stories!—Ed.



The CLUB HOUSE

Where science fiction fan clubs get together.

Conducted by **ROG PHILLIPS**

THE title of this editorial preface might be called WALT DUNKELBERGER. Or it might be titled, "What keeps fandom alive?" Or it might be called, "Old guard and young blood, a working combination." But it's mostly about Dunk. No, he didn't die, so it isn't a eulogy.

In fandom they come and they go. Some of them stay—like Dunk. FANEWS hasn't been coming out so regularly the last few months. I received a copy of something called FANEWS Portfolio. It contains some things new and some things old, put out by Dunk. There is a letter in it written by Lorraine. It says:

Dear Fan Friend:

They say that "friends in need are friends in deed." This is your opportunity to prove it by merely omitting the usual "beefs" when something you've seen before comes to you.

Walter was ill for some months earlier this year and unable to do any fan publishing. In June he suffered an attack of heat prostration which laid him low for two weeks longer. July 17th he cut his right hand and it became infected. As this is being stenciled his right hand is in a glucose pack and bandaged the size of a catcher's mitt. Chances are 50-50 that he'll have to go to the hospital for an operation and lose it . . .

I've set up and printed the folder in which this and the accompanying lithos appear. Some of the lithos you haven't seen before but most of them you have . . . Thank you.—Lorraine Dunkelberger.

That's his wife. They've been married twelve years and have five children, Jacqueline, Geraldine, James, Jon, and Jo Anne. Walt is thirty-four years old. He works as a motion picture projectionist, and has been a school teacher, high school principal, college prof., and air crew instructor (U.S.A.).

He's been reading sf since its first beginnings in promags. He started collecting promags. His search for missing copies led him to his first contact with fandom. He became interested in fandom and fan publications. He was publishing a mimeo zine called NUZ FROM HOME, a newszine for service men which had a peak circulation of 1,007. In 1944 he took over publication of FANEWSCARD, with issue #52, from Frank Robinson of Chicago, who had taken it over from

Bob Tucker who had begun it as a personal news-card copied after the style of a British publication. Since then he has brought out over 277 issues in all manner of format in all manners of reproduction from hectograph through photography, lithography, and printing.

He was Sec.-Treas. of N.F.F.F. in 1944-45, and Prex in 1946. In 1944 he made a trip to Chicago and met Frank Robinson, Bob Tucker, E. E. Evans, Ray Palmer, Howard Browne, Chet Geier, Malcolm Smith, Berkly Livingston, Bill Hamling, and others.

At one time there was a MinnDak Fantasy Society operating in Fargo with headquarters at the Dunkelbergers. The group, which numbered 34 at one time, broke up over financial trouble. Dunk took over the obligations and assets—library, etc.—of the group, and still has the library. Earl Kay, who was active in fandom with him and co-edited most of the fan publications, died in Europe just before V-E day.


There's the picture of Dunk. You might accuse him of making fandom "a way of life." But essentially, it provides him with an outlet for pursuing a hobby of publishing, with many friends all over the country, and with a way of doing things for others.

It's not an unusual picture. There are others in fandom who have been in it longer. There are others whose history in fandom is almost identical with Dunk's. There are some who have been in fandom since the first fan group formed about fifteen years ago.

Yes, it is hard to realize that with all the millions of years they say the Universe has been running (down), it was only that short a time ago that Fandom was born! But equally, it's hard to understand how Fandom WAS born, and why it persists! I myself think that it was mainly the fanzine that crystalized fandom into an "entity," and that it is the various fanzines that keep it that way. But it is really the Walts that have been the ones who kept it going while about them rose the Novae of fandom who flashed brilliantly a short time and then quietly went their way.

You can't say the Walts ARE fandom, any more than you can say the majority, who stay in fandom only a short year or so, are fandom. TOGETHER they are fandom. They are types. You find both types in the Masons, the Odd Fellows, the

(Continued on page 146)



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elks, and even in your local chamber of commerce.

But it is the Walts in any group that give it enduring life. So I salute Walt Dunkelberger for his staying qualities, and I salute his wife Lorraine for her act in bringing out a fanzine to help her husband. By the way, if you are in the market for a werewolf puppy, or if you want to pick up a good second hand lot in a graveyard for practically nothing, Dunk can see that you get fixed up. Second hand coffins, too. While he's laid up he's working as nightwatchman on the graveyard shift at the morgue.

* * *

It looks like things are getting back to normal at this writing, so that we can expect the CH to become regular again. But, sitting here at my desk day after day here at my office at 1718 Sherman, Evanston, Illinois, and watching the world of not only fandom and the prozines, but also the world in general, it is borne home to me perhaps more than to the average person that the only permanent thing is change.

This morning I got an 1896 quarter at the local greasy spoon in my change. It's thirteen years older than I am, and has been circulating through booms and depressions, peace and war. It's been clutched proudly by little kids who thought it was riches, tossed carelessly on green topped tables by gamblers who considered it worth little, rested in rolls with others of its ilk temporarily, to begin circulating all over again. It's been taken from the pockets of dead men by the undertaker, been lost for days or months, and found by someone other than the one who lost it. It's been all over the country, maybe all over the world. It may have been in New York a week ago, or it may have been here in Evanston for a month or a year.

And during its fifty-two years of wanderings and adventures it has worn very little. It's small change, but it hasn't changed at any time. It's bought twenty five pounds of spuds in 1933—and less than three pounds a month ago. It's bought a dozen eggs—and four eggs. It's bought a big juicy steak—and a hamburger sandwich. And it has worn hardly at all.

Maybe you think all that is just a pun on the meaning of change in the first paragraph. Whether it is or not it serves to bring out something of the meaning of that first paragraph.

Did you ever stop to think that that quarter is very much like an atom is to the universe? Take an Oxygen atom—a specific one. Today it may form part of a carbon dioxide molecule just leaving your lungs. A few moments ago it was part of your body. A year ago it may have been part of a water molecule in the Pacific Ocean, or the Atlantic. A hundred years ago it may have been part of a very complex molecule in a plant in an African jungle. A billion years ago it may have been part of the sun, or part of a small gas cloud in interstellar space. And all the time it was the same, an Oxygen atom. A specific atom.

It wasn't always that. Just as the 1896 quarter

was once stamped at the government mint into the form it has now, and will someday be gone, so also there was the first moment that specific Oxygen atom came into being, and there will be a day when it is gone, changed into something else.

But while it exists it plays its part in the change and swirl and activity of the universe just as the 1896 quarter plays its part in the daily financial activity of our lives.

Both the atom and the 1896 quarter have played the roll of permanence in a world of change, and each is itself a thing that will eventually change. It might seem that it would be valid to conclude that there is NOTHING that will never change.

Yet the basic faith of religion is that there is an enduring, unchangeable God; and the basic faith of science is that there is an enduring, unchangeable "something" whose activity IS all reality. In both science and religion the striving of mankind is for the *enduring* realities, the enduring human values, and the enduring natural order whose mastery makes possible the technology and civilization of today. In this reaching for the enduring it may be that some day science and religion will each discover that God and the "something" of science are the same. Who knows?

All of which brings us up to a change in policy due to this difference between change and permanence. Fandom is an enduring thing. Fanzines are not. I've decided to discontinue the permanent list for several reasons, the most important of which is that there are so few fanzines that publish regularly and at regular prices. After this the price and address will appear with the review of the fanzine. In that way, those who do not send in a fanzine for review for the simple reason that they are no longer publishing will not keep on receiving subscriptions on the strength of the permanent list. Of course that means that the fanzines who sent in one copy and stopped, but are still publishing, will have to send each copy to get reviewed and listed, but that is only fair to all concerned.

* * *

LESTER FRIED, 2050 Midland, Louisville 4, Ky., announces that he is going to try his hand at publishing a letterzine. He intends for his first issue to be about twenty pages, mimeographed, and will appear every other month. He will have two friends working with him on it—Bill Wentworth and Russell Watkins. He needs letters and subscriptions, 10c, 3/25c.

Those wanting to know if there is a fan club in or near their city are Howard D. Madans, 3609 Wendelkin, Dallas, Texas; Gordon L. Barlow, Box 121, N.O.B. Navy #926, % F.P.O., San Francisco, who says the Colorado group interests him as it is near his home; Georgia Eggleston, 1003 E. Mohave St., Phoenix, Arizona; Walter Peck, 23 W. 93rd St., New York 25, N. Y.; W. B. Ellem, 1202 W. Broadway, Spokane 11, Wash.

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organized to further the development of space flight and to afford a common meeting place for Mid-Western enthusiasts. Meetings are held in downtown Chicago on the third Friday of each month (8 p.m., Rm. 518, Roosevelt College, 440 S. Michigan Blvd.). Visitors are welcomed.

The Society maintains a strong technical program, described in our Project List, under which members prepare reports on a chosen sub-project. All classes of technical training are useful in this work. Members not technically trained can learn under our staff, and are invited to participate in our program or publications work. There is no work requirement, however, and many of the members attend meetings just to listen.

The Society publishes its news and project reports in the Rocket News Letter, our monthly journal, free to members. Membership is open to all. Active members (\$5/year) have full membership privileges; associate members, \$2/year, do not hold office or receive special publications.

You are invited to attend our next meeting. For additional information, write: Patricia Crossley, secretary, 91 Pine Ave., Riverside, Illinois.

The Torcon is over. SPACEWARP (10c, Arthur H. Rapp, 2120 Bay St., Saginaw, Mich.) gives Rapp's very entertaining account of it from his own experiences at the convention. The next one will be in Cincinnati, and will be called the Cinvention.

By that time I hope to have under production my new atom gun and place it on sale at the Cinvention. As a special introductory offer I'll give three dozen extra atoms with each gun without extra charge. Imagine! The fans who this year tore Toronto apart with mere water pistols will be armed with atom guns! I can hardly wait.

THE FANTASY VETERANS' ASSOCIATION: This is just starting, but its officers are oldtimers in fandom and it should succeed, due to their experience. Raymond J. Van Houten, temporary secretary, writes asking me to announce its formation, and to invite all fans who are veterans with a minimum of three months in military service a pre-requisite for joining. The temporary commander is James V. Taurasi, editor of Fantasy-Times. Write to FVA at either 101-02 Northern Blvd., Corona, L. I., N. Y., or 409 Markey St., Paterson 3, N. J., for information and an application blank.

FANTASY COMMENTATOR: A. Langley Searles, 7A East 235th St., New York 66, N. Y. 25c, pub. quarterly. Thirty-six pages of high quality mimeography. Part 12 of the history of fandom, appropriately titled The Immortal Storm, by Sam Moskowitz. Other articles by Searles, Paul Spencer, James Warren Thomas, Thyril Ladd, David H. Keller, Bill Evans, Joe Schaumberger, Charles Brady, Ray Van Houten, and Winston F. Dawson.

SPACEWARP: Art Rapp, 2120 Bay St., Saginaw, Mich., 10c. The June and July numbers on hand. The July number contains the story of the

Torcon. Also part six of the contest serial, this time by Wally Weber, and stuff by Bob Stein and Radell Nelson.

The June issue had part five of the Great STF Broadcast by Redd Boggs, a controversial article by Vaughn Greene, and three short stories by Ballard, Nelson, and Brazier. One of the most alive, and I do mean alive, fanzines today!

FANTASY-TIMES: James V. Taurasi, 101-02 Northern Blvd., Corona, N. Y. Price for new sub. has gone up to 15c, 2/25c. June and July numbers on hand. Six full pages of reports on meetings of fan clubs, in the June issue. Quite an interesting letter department in the June issue.

The best developed department of F-T is The Cosmic Reporter, conducted by Lane Stannard, and slanted toward news concerning prozines and pro-developments.

Mr. Taurasi and the staff of co-workers are very active in all eastern sf doings. All fan activities in and around New York find them in there pitching.

THE ROCKET NEWS LETTER: Patricia G. Crossley, 91 Pine Ave., Riverside, Illinois. Official organ of the CHICAGO ROCKET SOCIETY. This society is very interested in getting new members in the Chicago area. It meets once a month just off the Loop. If you would like to attend a meeting drop Pat a card. She will send you one free copy of THE ROCKET NEWS LETTER if you live in the Chicago area, and directions for getting to the club room.

To all others, 15c a copy. I attended a recent meeting and tried to talk them into dropping the price for fandom, but they are primarily interested in active members rather than amateur publishing, so no soap. But they are an intelligent and friendly group devoted to one primary purpose: the study and discussion of all phases of rocket and jet propulsion, with emphasis on the problem of space flight.

The John Henry of their president is John Henry, by strange coincidence; a very presentable and intelligent young man somewhere in his middle twenties.

If you're interested, write and ask for a free copy of the Rocket News Letter and information on the next meeting.

THE BURROUGHS BULLETIN: Vernell and Dorothea Coriell, Box 78, Manito, Illinois; free, but please enclose a stamp. A rather belated December '47 number, but I understand the Coriells have been busy. Devoted entirely to doings about Burroughsdom. An open letter to Johnny Weissmuller pleading with him not to give up his role in the Tarzan pictures is written by Al Howard. An article on "How Old Is Tarzan?" is by John Harwood. After four and one-half pages of really hard work proving Tarzan is now 60 years old, Vernell comes in with an editorial note of three lines saying, "Since the above article was written it has been revealed in the new Tarzan book that the ape-man has acquired perpetual youth." Do I hear John Harwood saying, "Darn!"?

Always being glad to do a favor for any gal from Texas, I make an exception and print the following letter. It will have to be the one exception because there is a regular letter column department elsewhere in the magazine.

THE CLUB HOUSE

Amazing Stories

Rog Phillips, manager

Dear Sir:

This is my first letter to a mag. I am hoping you will print it. You see, I want to join the VAMPYRE CLUB and I have to have a letter published to be eligible.

I am a new reader of yours, my first being "So Shall Ye Reap." If any of you readers have an extra copy of these I would like to buy it. Somehow mine vanished and I'm not sure where to. I have just started reading the Oct. Amazing Stories and I'm sure it will be as good as those in the past. Thanks a million.

Mrs. Tehah Tanner

1602 — 3rd

Lubbock, Texas

I hope this qualifies you for membership in the VAMPYRE CLUB, Tehah, and in case any of the rest of you gals are interested, it is a club for females only. For particulars write to Marion "Astra" Zimmer, Acting Secretary VAMPYRE SOCIETY, R.F.D. No. 1, East Greenbush, N. Y. I want to point out that the requirement of at least a letter published includes letters in fanzines as well as promags, so why don't you girls write to fanmag editors as well as the promags. After all, the promags are a little harder to get a letter published in than the fanzines.

* * *

If you have a yen to be an author, a poet, or an artist, fandom is your home. If you are a prolific letter writer fandom is your native habitat, you genius. If you like to feud on anything at all, just so its feudin' and fightin', fandom is all that remains today of the Roman Arena. But best of all, if what you want is friends galore who think and talk as you do, fandom is the nearest thing to a big, happy, spread out family of kids of all ages that you'll ever find, from the intensely ambitious and highly gifted fourteen-year-old Con Pederson, to the mature, highly educated research scientist, Dr. Tom Gardner.

But above all these in my estimation, if you are a person who likes real humor, real American humor, real belly laughs, good hearty clean humor, uninhibited brash disrespectful braggadocio, fearless Don Quixote to-the-death humor, and sheer enjoyment of life and unrestricted mental horizons, you will find it in fandom. Maybe not in one particular fanzine; but in the general cross-section of them all.

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THE MICHIFAN: A one-page bulletin of the MSFS for June, taken up largely with plans for going to the Torcon. It announces six new members, four living in Detroit, and two in Cadillac. Come on, you fans and readers in Michigan! Join up. Write to Art Rapp, Sec. M.S.F.S., 2120 Bay St., Saginaw, Mich., for details. And enclose a stamp.

SPARX: Henry M. Spelman III, 75 Sparks St., Cambridge 38, Mass., 10c, June 1948. The editorial page says that Hank followed all suggestions on how to improve the zine except the one for him to drop dead. He had to draw the line there. I can't help asking why? But seriously, it's one of the best mimeo jobs I've seen. Thirty pages for a dime, and if you went in the dime store you'd pay that for the blank paper! And on page 27 is a framed portrait of Rotsler! The letter department, Dissections, is almost as long as Fandom Speaks, the letterzine, used to be. There's a crossword puzzle on page 13. Also plenty of interesting reading on the rest of the pages.

IF!: Con Pederson, 705 W. Kelso, Inglewood, Cal., 10c. Con is one of the most popular young fans and one of the most active. I don't know how he does it! This is the June issue, the third put out to date. Thirty-two half-size pages and plenty of good illustrations by both Con and by Howard Miller of Dream Quest, make this a professional looking book. Most interesting article is by Keller, the pro writer, who begins with, "Today I had the unusual thrill of having one of my stories rejected by the editor of a FANZINE who says, 'The plot has been used over and over again!'" He then goes on to talk about plots and how often they may be repeated. He concludes with what I believe to be a mistaken view. In short, his conclusion is that the readers are crying for new plots and new slants, but the editors "follow the Old Gods" and refuse to buy stories with new plots and slants. A review of the general science fiction and fantasy field shows this is not true at all. And the editors of *all* the prozines are continually on the lookout for distinctly new plots and angles, **WELL WRITTEN AND WELL DEVELOPED.** What they want and what they get are two different things. They can't go out and pound inspiration and writing ability into a writer's head, though most of them do almost that in their effort to get the impossible—a brand new idea and plot that are developed and written with slick magazine polish, at the price they can afford to pay.

STFANATIC: Hugh McInnes, % T.M.C.A., Warren, Ark. No price listed. This second issue is a definite improvement over the first. Sixteen half pages with a rather successful experiment in double column, but seventeen letter spaces of width makes for too much justifying space to make it worth while. However, Hugh has the right idea;—publishing a fanzine is largely a personal adventure, and if he wants to try double column on half sheets he can have a lot of fun at it anyway.

We have four imposing items in the Volume 1, Number 1, group this month. Two are ditto print and two are mimeographed. By far the most imposing and perhaps the best single fanzine I've ever seen is

FAN ARTISAN: by the Fantasy Artisan group. Club headquarters, Box 105, Los Alamos, Cal. Editorial office is Box 1746, Orcutt, Cal., 10c. The back page reveals ten members of this group. Five of them live in California, two in Des Moines, Iowa, one each in Kings Park, Long Island, Louisville, Ky., and Roseland, Va. Don't think they didn't all work to put out this zine though. That is one of the nice things about mimeoing. You can make your own stencils and mail them anywhere. The guy that has the machine merely sticks in the stencil and turns the crank. Forty-five pages. Best feature is, (you guessed it), (What! You weren't guessing?), a comic strip. Fanhumor highlight on page 5; "In the summer of 1929 Ken Brown was born. Several months later the stock market crashed."

SPEARHEAD: Tom Carter, 817 Starling Ave., Martinsville, Va., free on request. Thirteen pages, not numbered. The Grah Bag (letter dept.) is the most interesting feature, though there are eight other very interesting items.

PEON: Charles Lee Riddle, 2116 Edsall Court, Alameda, Cal. No charge. (On these free zines send a stamp to at least pay the postage.) Two very good short-short stories top the contents. Meeting of Minds, the letter column, has a worthwhile letter by Con Pederson, ending with the question, what will fan publications be like ten years from now? PEON introduces something novel;—a dollar prize for the best letter in each issue. With that incentive PEON should develop into the next thing to a letterzine.

THE TIME MACHINE: Gordon Mack, Jr., Box 138, Lake Arthur, La. (I THINK that is the right address, though unfortunately it was blurred in my copy. Anyway it makes me think of something all you fan eds should remember. If at any time your address is printed incorrectly, what you should do at once is send a change of address to the P.O., giving the incorrect address as your old address, and your right one as the new one. Get the idea?)

An unframed portrait of Rotsler on page ten is the high point. Contents are excellent, topped by a satire by Joe Kennedy. Considering that hektograph goo melts so easily, and it's that hot in Louisiana right now, I can't find the heart to comment unfavorably on the quality of printing. Nice going, Gordon.

THE GORGON: 20c, 7/\$1.00; Volume 2, No. 1, Stanley Mullen, 4936 Grove St., Denver 11, Col. Sixty-two pages. I'm distinctly at a loss to account for the zine. Let me tell you why. There are 62 pages of slick paper. And a much nicer printing job than most prozines. Gorgon has won the NFFB laureate award as the best general interest fanzine, and Stan Mullen won an-



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other as its editor. So now he puts out a zine so far ahead of his former one that no other zine will ever be able to equal it! I shake my head in wonder.

DREAM QUEST: 25¢, Vol. 1, No. 6; Don Wilson, 495 3rd St., Banning, Cal. The best of the mimeographed fanzines is folding. This is the last issue. Don Wilson and Howard Miller are taking the vows and will henceforth stroll through the dusty halls of that most inner of innermost innersanctums, F.A.P.A., in which I myself am a Friar-at-large. The authorship on the contents page in this last issue includes Redd Boggs, Francis T. Laney, Joe Kennedy, Harry Warner, Jr., Tigrina, and others, with artwork by Stein, Nelson, Grossman, Rotsler, Don Phillips, Boh Dougherty, and Howard Miller. Forty-eight pages, and Don takes his leave of the general fanzine field with the certain knowledge that others may equal his effort but never surpass it. If you send for a copy enclose a stamped and self-addressed envelope so you can get your quarter back. It's a gamble if any are left when you read this.

SPACEWARP: 10¢, 12/\$1.00, Arthur H. Rapp, 2120 Bay St., Saginaw, Mich., Vol. 3, No. 5. The seventh installment of The Great Stf Broadcast is by Paul D. Cox. Each installment is written by a different person in a free for all elimination contest. After it comes an educational article entitled, "Trisection? Hell yes, Lumphead!" by Keith Hoyt. The Singer-Conner feud comes to life again with a two page reply by Singer, with a drawing of him at his typewriter. Conner follows with an article suggesting that the "canals" of Mars might be huge buildings—a world within a world. This has nothing to do with the feud and is a very intelligent article. Ahr slyly fans the flames by adding a comment afterward: "Is this why Singer tried to buy a telescope at the Torcon?" Other entertaining items and a good letter column rounds out the issue.

THE MUTANT: July, 10¢, official organ of the Michigan Science-Fantasy Society, George Young, 22180 Middlebelt Rd., Framington, Mich. They've coined a nickname for MSFSites; it's Misfits. They've bought a bottle of black ink and thrown away the red. The treasury now has a balance of \$16.24! Dr. David H. Keller was voted a lifetime honorary membership in MSFS at the Torcon. Mrs. Keller also joined and became the first MISS Fit in the society. These boys in Michigan are tops. If you live in that state and don't contact them you're missing something. There's an interesting article by Art Rapp discussing whether Fort was an atheist or not. He concludes that the title question can't be answered, and proposes another question, "Are atheists Fortean?" Mutant may be an official clubzine, but for interest and non-cluh material it can't be beat. It invites subscriptions from any place. Send for a copy.

LOKI: Summer, 1948; Gerry de la Ree, 46 Johnson Ave., Hackensack, N. J., 10¢. This is the second issue of this fanzine. Seventeen pages,

mostly fantasy poetry by outstanding fan poets. It reminds me—someone recently sent me a dime and wanted LOKI. This department does not handle subscriptions for zines nor act as agent for any of them. Please contact the addresses given for each fanzine if you want to get one. And don't forget to enclose a stamp. Russell Harold Woodman of Portland, Maine, offers a five dollar prize for the outstanding piece of fiction or poetry in this issue of LOKI. The prize was won in the first issue by Albert Toth for his poem, "The Painting."

Which reminds me—don't forget about the hundred dollars in prizes this department is giving for the most outstanding items in fanzines during 1948. A fifty dollar first prize, a twenty-five dollar second prize, and ten subscriptions to Amazing Stories. It doesn't matter what fanzine it appears in, either. These prizes may be incorporated with other awards that may be forthcoming if the plans of Ray Van Houten, secretary of the Eastern Science Fiction Association, work out, to form some kind of recognition committee in fandom to make similar awards with perhaps trophies awarded by various fan groups.

FANTASY-TIMES: 15c, 8/\$1.00, August, 1948; is the 68th issue! Probably one of the oldest fanzines still being published. The feature article is part one of The Torcon Report by Bill Sykora. Oh yes—James V. Taurasi, 101-02 Northern Blvd., Corona, N. Y. Jimmy tells me he can accept a few more subscribers now. He was sort of snowed under recently when subscriptions went up to as many as he could bring out. For those of you who want complete coverage of pro-happenings in all fields dealing with sf this is a must. One important feature is reports from as many fan clubs as send in their reports.

Taurasi is now publishing a British edition of Fantasy-Times for free distribution to British fans who send for it. This is *not* for American fans. Names of British fans are wanted so it can be sent to them. Ray Van Houten will edit this British F-T. The present plan is to get out a new issue once a month. F-T is also anxious to receive news of British fan doings for publication in both the American and British editions of F-T. I think this will be a real service to our friends in England. Houten and Taurasi are doing this at their own expense and certainly deserve a lot of credit for it.

OTHER WORLDS (KAY-MAR TRADER): July, 1948, 5c, and you'd better hurry because subscriptions are going to be limited to two hundred persons. Paul D. Cox, 3401 6th Ave., Columbus, Georgia. Thirty-two pages full of sales and swaps and wants, letter dept., articles, poems, and reviews. An interesting page is titled "Thots While Frying Eggs," with the explanation, "We must admit this title is almost a direct steal from a similar one by Laney. We don't know where Laney stole it." Part way down on this page is, "Manuscript found in the trash can at the Torcon. The author of this fine fantasy is unknown. 'I was

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once a poor little fan, completely unknown and completely ignored. Now that I have attended two major conventions and 23 ESFA meetings and have a collection of 500 books, I am a poor little fan, completely unknown and ignored. Sob."

Send me your name and history, hub.

UNIVERSE: Vol. 1, No. 2, 10c, 3/25c, Ray Nelson, 433 E. Chapin St., Cadillac, Mich., sports a black front cover with a radioactive skull. Wonderful letter section. An explanation of the new MSFS nickname is given by Hal Shapiro, who says, "Misfits means Michigan Instigators of Science Fantasy for Intellectually Thinking Society." Twenty-six pages. Ray Nelson has a two page discussion titled "The Theory of Relative Reality," in which he divides reality into three kinds: objective, public, and private. I agree with him that this is an excellent division. Private reality is what is real to you. Public reality is what the democratic majority agrees is real. Objective reality includes "a good deal of public and private reality, but nobody knows how much, of which, or whose. To be absolutely frank about it nobody knows for sure anything about it." He concludes: "The less said about reality the better."

And then there's an article by Walt Nelson titled "Science Fiction: Is It Literature?" And some other things.

THE SFANATIC: Vol. 1, No. 3. Hugh McInnes. The last issue for some time, he announces, because he's going to go to college. He did very well with this last issue in spite of the fact that his hektograph went the hekto—and he had to learn how to use an ancient mimeo machine. Hugh's experiment in double column was abandoned in this issue. The N.F.F.F. manuscript bureau provides a short fantasy for Hugh, by Stewart Metchette, a Canadian fan. Art Rapp is operating the National Fantasy Fan Federation manuscript bureau and is doing a good job. If your favorite fanzine doesn't have room for your article or short short story, send it to the ms bureau % Art Rapp, 2120 Bay St., Saginaw, Michigan, and he'll place it for you. You will get a free copy of the fanzine it appears in, too.

If you want to join the largest group in sfandom it is the N.F.F.F. There are many advantages in belonging. You can more quickly get a more accurate perspective of all phases of fanactivity. Also you get reduced prices on many publications by being a member. For particulars, write K. Martin Carlson, Secretary, 1028 3rd Ave. S., Moorhead, Minn.

Don't forget that this department is offering a hundred dollars in prizes for the best items appearing in fanzines during 1948. The first prize is fifty dollars in cash, and that is something to go after! Every single one of the fanzines reviewed in this column is **CRYING** for material—amateur material. **PEON** is offering a prize of a dollar for the best letter they print in each issue. All the fanzines offer free copies as payment for material. Without that donated material a fanzine becomes a one-man chore.

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